



CORBETT

MAHAN IS NOT ENOUGH
The Proceedings of a Conference
on the Works of
Sir Julian Corbett
and
Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond



RICHMOND

Edited
by
James Goldrick
and
John B. Hattendorf



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ATTENDEES AT THE CORBETT-RICHMOND CONFERENCE

HELD AT THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE,
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, 28-29 SEPTEMBER 1992



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Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to the Corbett-Richmond Conference that was held at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, on 28 and 29 September 1992. During the Naval War College's 1990 Mahan Centennial Conference, Professor Clark Reynolds had suggested that the College examine Corbett's work anew, in the light of the post-Cold War situation. Even before his appointment as a visiting research scholar at the Naval War College in 1991-1992, Commander James Goldrick and I had agreed that a conference on both Corbett and Richmond was a logical and appropriate follow-on to the Mahan Conference. Dr. Robert S. Wood, Dean of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies, was sympathetic to our interest in naval history and theory and quickly saw its relevance to the current College curriculum and research work. He enthusiastically agreed to sponsor the conference as part of the work of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies.

Less than a month before the conference began, one of our key speakers and a leading scholar on the subject at hand, Professor Barry Hunt, Dean of Arts at the Royal Military College of Canada, died in Toronto. Only two days before his sudden death on 4 September 1992, he had mailed us a draft of his paper. Captain A.B. Sainsbury, R.N.R., graciously presented a summary of Barry's paper at the Conference and led us in an appropriate tribute to the memory of a good friend and colleague.

Many contributed to the administrative support for the conference which was initially laid out by Lieutenant Commander Chris Benigno, U.S. Navy, and capably carried out by his successor, Commander John W. Kennedy, U.S. Navy. Mrs. Barbara Prisk took great initiative in the timely preparation of all the papers for the conference as well as undertaking a wide range of other activities from making initial travel arrangements to transcribing the tapes after the conference. Jim Collins's capable help ensured that the contracts were properly prepared. Commander Kennedy devoted many hours to listening to the tapes while assisting in editing the transcriptions and papers for publication.

The staff of the Commissioned Officers Mess (Open) assisted with lunch arrangements, and the Viking Hotel provided rooms and the banquet dinner.

The Naval War College Foundation generously contributed to both the conference and to the publication of this volume.

John B. Hattendorf
Conference Director

Opening Remarks

Rear Admiral Joseph C. Strasser, U.S. Navy

Good morning to all of you. It is a great pleasure to welcome each of you this morning and to open a conference on the influence and contemporary relevance of the naval historians and strategists Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond. Two years ago, in 1990, we held a similar conference here to look at the work of Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan. I think that it is only logical that we carry forward the momentum from that conference and move on to consider the newer thoughts which Corbett and Richmond presented.

Many of you have already made substantial contributions to our understanding of Corbett's and Richmond's achievements. I sense that, as we look at the new structure of international relations in the world today and consider the role of navy within it, we can all benefit from a renewed look at their understanding of naval forces. As we evaluate the navy's role in the context of the new structure of international relations, we need to understand clearly the intellectual heritage on which our understanding of sea power is based, and we need to reexamine our assumption about it within the context of the different international situation which prevails today.

All of you here are widely recognized for your contribution to the study of naval history and naval affairs. I can think of no other group of individuals better qualified to examine the key subject matter of this conference, nor can I imagine a group with a greater capacity to bring out the key issues and to place them in the context that will be useful to senior naval leaders around the world. I am particularly pleased to welcome so many participants from abroad who will take the ideas we discuss here in Newport and add them to the discourse of naval affairs in other parts of the globe. Thus, it is a particular pleasure for me to recognize and welcome participants from Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Your views and contributions to our discussions here will provide an especially valuable dimension to thinking within the United States Navy. The process of sharing perceptions, which you begin here today, is filled with great potential. The success of the conference will be contingent on the insight, candor, and conviction that each of you brings to these discussions. I look forward to monitoring your progress in this endeavor.

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If there is anything at all that we here at the Naval War College can do to add to the success of the conference or to make you feel more welcome here, I would be most pleased to do it. We consider it a great honor to have all of you with us, and we wish you well in the deliberations of the conference. Thank you very much.

Opening Remarks

Robert S. Wood

I am delighted to welcome all of you to Newport, Rhode Island, and to the Naval War College. As John Hattendorf has already indicated, the War College is committed to the process of education, particularly of educating those who will hold within their hands the fate of many nations in a world undergoing substantial change. In that area we do many things typical of an educational institution: good teaching, scholarly individual research, as well as directed research here in the Center for Naval Warfare Studies. Also, we have a rather unique device for thinking through ideas at the Naval War College, different from any other institution with which I have been associated, which is to say gaming and simulation. This is a very useful, although by no means definitive device, but a useful one by which we can think through both the past and present and some of the issues we are going to face in the future.

This is a particularly important conference in ways that may not be self-evident. Years ago, the Chief of Naval Operations established the Strategic Studies Group, a small and carefully selected group of officers based here at the Naval War College, including Marines, Navy and the Coast Guard, to advise him on advanced strategic concepts. They spend a year reflecting on what the strategic world looks like and how we should operate in that world. Some years ago, they prepared a scroll on what they called "Ten Pretty Good Rules." I received one of the scrolls and one of the ten pretty good rules was: "If you want a new idea, read an old book." That is indeed an excellent rule to live by. We are asking you today to read some old books so that we can come up with some new ideas.

I should tell you I have a particular, personal bias for intellectual history. I happen to believe that how one thinks about events becomes the defining character of the event itself and, generally, the guide to action. In this conference, we are engaging in intellectual history of a very high order. It allows us to examine some very important ideas in the light of current events that, therefore, may provide a guide for us in actions that we may have to take in the future.

Today, we are facing new situations. We have new instruments to face those situations, but we also have in our bag of tools some very old concepts. Some of them are very useful concepts that we need to rethink and to reapply in creating a vibrant enterprise in the same way that Corbett and Richmond and, before them, Mahan, had done. There are a number of issues among those concepts:

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- Command of the sea: We are told today that command of the sea is no longer an issue, at least in a contemporary sense, and that we should *assume* that we already have command of the sea.
- Littoral warfare is a crucial issue which we face and about which we have not done as much thinking as we should.
- Striking from the sea, and related to it, power projection, has become another issue and a crucial one.
- Forward presence is something we need to define in terms of meaning and degree as well as in terms of other names used for it throughout history.
- Joint warfare in the American context, as many of you know, concerns the several services of our military institutions cooperating together. It is always a central problem facing the United States in the conduct of military force.
- Combined, allied action is an equally important question.

Both Corbett and Richmond have some very wise, interesting things to say about all these issues for the contemporary context. We need to think about them as we enter into an era of international relations that I would call “normal” times. However, we should never forget that normal times are remarkably abnormal! We are going from the clarity of a crusade to the obscurity of the mundane, and we are having a very tough time in this country. I do not know if you are having the same tough time, trying to think through what we do in a very mundane world. However, I do believe that education is central to this enterprise. I should share with you the fact that I have a very pronounced Jeffersonian bias. I happen to believe that knowledge is better than ignorance, that sagacity is better than stupidity, and that reflection is better than reaction. I think that defines the very characteristic of education. Thomas Jefferson, at one point, said that education will define the ultimate survival of the Republic which we call the United States, and I suspect also the various republics which you also represent.

I do believe, therefore, that wise detachment is indeed the preliminary to effective action, and we do well, periodically, to retreat into the company of giants. Over the next two days we are going to retreat into the company of two giants and think a little bit about how they thought through the issues which were facing them in both mundane and crusading times and decide, I think either directly or indirectly, the applicability of what they reflected upon to our own circumstance. You are here to assist very much in that excursion. You are engaged in what I would call a strategic retreat, preliminary to wise statecraft and the rational and the reasonable use of force. I could almost offer an invocation. Being a Monday morning, perhaps a prayer is a useful thing; and, that invocation would be that we will have the courage to confront new truths,

we will also have the wisdom to suspect half-truths, and we will have the humility to understand we do not know all the truth. As we approach Richmond and Corbett, I hope you will do it in that spirit and that when we end our proceedings tomorrow, we will be edified thereby and our professions and the profession of arms will also be thereby edified. Again I welcome you to Newport. Thank you very much for coming, and also, I stand in awe of the fact that virtually all the papers preliminary to this conference are completed and in hand. I consider this to be an achievement of a very high order.

Mahan Is Not Enough Conference Themes and Issues

John B. Hattendorf

One need not explain to the choir why they sing in church. You show by your presence in this well-filled room here this morning that you share our interest and devotion to the subject at hand. Still, there may well be those who wonder why the United States Navy should have a serious interest in two British historians who wrote many years ago. We in the United States have our own Mahan, why isn't he good enough for us?

I suppose that there will always be skeptics. Twenty-one years ago, as a young naval lieutenant, I gave a talk on Sir Julian Corbett to my classmates in the Department Head course at Destroyer School here in Newport.¹ We were a good bunch of friends who enjoyed teasing one another. The next day I found the name tag on my desk reversed. Someone had painted a small Union flag in the corner and the name read: "Sir Julie Ho-Hum." Here I am again, humming the same hymn.

Corbett and Richmond in the U.S. Navy.

Corbett and Richmond have already played a role in the development of American naval thinking. We have not overlooked their names and their thought, but we do need to understand them better. As early as 1894, the Naval War College staff had listed *Drake and the Tudor Navy* on the list of recommended reading.² Up until 1910, the courses here were only four months long, held during the summer months. When the first long course of sixteen months began in 1911, we find Corbett's newly published *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* and his *England in the Seven Years' War* on the required reading list.³ Interestingly, in the spring of 1911, we find that staff planners had quoted only one historian in its new version of War Plan Orange. In its pages, the war planners wrote:

¹ Later published as "Sir Julian Corbett on the significance of naval history," *The American Neptune*, 31 (October 1971), pp. 275–85.

² Naval War College (hereafter NWC) Archives, Record Group (hereafter RG) 8, Box 53: UNT 1897: "Books recommended for a course of reading [1894]."

³ NWC Archives, RG 8, Box 53, UNT 1911: "Long Course, 1911."

Corbett, in his *England in the Seven Years' War* states the . . . maxim in words that are particularly applicable to this case. He says, 'To be tempted into taking the offensive in an area that is not the true area of the war and in which the enemy is naturally stronger, is not to show vigor but to play stupidly into the enemy's hands'.⁴

Mahan, himself, admired Corbett's work and included his essay on the "Capture of Private Property at Sea" in the book, *Some Neglected Aspects of War*.⁵ In preparing lectures to give at the Naval War College in 1910, later published as part of his influential book, *Naval Strategy*,⁶ Mahan made direct use of Corbett's *England in the Mediterranean* and *England in the Seven Years' War*.⁷

Also in 1911, when Secretary of the Navy George von Lengerke Meyer asked Mahan to comment on a proposal for a National Council of Defense, Mahan replied with direct reference to Corbett's study of the Seven Years' War. He urged Meyer to consider carefully the fact that the strength of English action in that war came from holding the three related functions of army, navy and diplomacy in one hand.⁸

In London during World War I, Corbett met Admiral William S. Sims, the commander-in-chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe. In 1918, Sims helped bring Corbett's work to American attention by facilitating the shipment of 150 copies of *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* across the Atlantic.⁹ Later, in 1921 when Sims had returned to Newport as President of this college, he sent Corbett a copy of the Congressional *Hearings before the Committee on Naval Affairs*, providing Corbett some useful documentation on American participation in the War to use in his *History of Naval Operations*.¹⁰

⁴ Orange Plan 1911, p. 7. Mahan disagreed with this point; see his critique of the 1911 Orange Plan in a letter to Naval War College President, Rear Admiral Raymond P. Rodgers, 4 March 1911, in Robert Seager II and Doris Maguire, eds., *The Letters and Papers of Alfred Thayer Mahan*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1975), iii, p. 394.

⁵ Item A14 in Hattendorf, *A Bibliography of the Works of Alfred Thayer Mahan*. (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1986). See also the letter, Mahan to Corbett, 12 August 1907, in Seager and Maguire, eds., *The Letters and Papers*, iii, p. 223, and references to the production of the volume in correspondence with Mahan's publishers, Little, Brown & Co., on pp. 223–32.

⁶ Item A18 in *Mahan Bibliography*.

⁷ See Mahan to the President, Naval War College, 20 December 1908 and 16 April 1910, in Seager and Maguire, *Letters and Papers*, iii, pp. 273, 338. See also Mahan's research notes in Naval Historical Collection, Naval War College, Manuscript Collection 17: Papers of A.T. Mahan, Box 4, Notebooks: Notes for Lectures [1907-1913], volume 13, pp. 4–11, 18–21, 24–30, 33–36 which include ATM's immediate reflections and comparisons with his *Influence of Sea Power Upon History* upon reading Corbett's *England in the Mediterranean and England in the Seven Year's War*. His published references to Corbett in *Naval Strategy* can also be found in Hattendorf, ed., *Mahan on Naval Strategy*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), pp. 224 note 2, 251, 258.

⁸ Mahan to Meyer, 1 February 1911 in Seager and Maguire, *Letters and Papers*, iii, pp. 374–75. Printed in *Hearings Before the House Naval Affairs Committee*, 61st Congress, 3d session [1911], p. 670.

⁹ National Maritime Museum, Greenwich: Corbett Papers, Box 1: Sims to Corbett, 9 October 1918.

¹⁰ National Maritime Museum, Greenwich: Corbett Papers, Box 13: Correspondence with Naval Officers L-W: Sims to Corbett, 16 April 1921.

Students at the Naval War College in Newport regularly read Corbett's *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* in the 1930s,¹¹ and, since 1972, it has consistently been part of the required reading for our current course in Strategy and Policy.

Richmond was Corbett's only disciple as a naval historian. The Naval War College archives reveal less about the extent of Richmond's influence. Nearly all of his books are in our library and we find that his *National Policy and Naval Strategy* was on the prescribed reading list when Richmond came to Newport. He lectured here on 30 August 1930 on the subject "Objectives of War."¹² We know also that he wrote an article for the Naval Institute *Proceedings* in February 1944. The fact that there are still multiple copies of his *Statesmen and Sea Power* in the Eccles Library suggests that his work was assigned reading at some point after 1946-1947.

These stray nuggets from the archives suggest that Corbett and Richmond are not merely inhabitants of some English compartment in naval history, but very much a part of the intellectual tradition of the United States Navy.

More broadly, I would argue that a large proportion of professional naval thought on strategy has derived from historical study. It was, of course, Mahan who popularized this approach and who became extremely successful in using it. But his work was the successful application of ideas that Sir John Knox Laughton had suggested earlier, and that had also been taken up by others, including Sir Philip Colomb, Corbett, and Richmond.¹³ There is a complex inter-relationship between these men, as Don Schurman pointed out for us in his pioneering study, *The Education of a Navy*. We need to continue the impetus which Don has laid out in a lifetime of scholarship on this subject. We need to return once again to these writers, considering their thought carefully in the light of continuing historical research and understanding. This is the thought behind the Naval Institute's "Classics of Sea Power" series, identifying key works, adding a modern commentary on them with additional documents and annotation, and making the books available in definitive editions. It was good fortune, but not entirely chance, that Eric Grove's edition of Corbett's *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* was the first volume to appear when that series began in 1988. Mahan is not enough; we need to consider a wide range of thinkers and writers, among whom Corbett and Richmond stand out.

This conference can serve to widen perspectives as well as to deepen our knowledge about these men. The papers that our participants present today and tomorrow will find a wider audience when we publish the proceedings of this

¹¹ NWC Archives, RG 4, file 1871: "Prescribed Reading List for Junior Course 1934."

¹² Naval War College Archives, RG 10: Academic Planning Calendar, 19 August 1930; 30 August 1930. Regrettably, the Naval War College archives has neither the text of Richmond's lecture nor his substantive correspondence with Naval War College President, Rear Admiral Harris Laning, in 1930-31, although both are noted in the card index.

¹³ Laughton's *Studies in Naval History* and Colomb's *Naval Warfare* were also on the 1894 reading list, cited in footnote 2.

meeting. In addition to them, we have added bibliographies of Corbett's and Richmond's writings.

To parallel this, Don Schurman and I have planned an additional entry to Corbett's bibliography, by publishing the first public edition of *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905*. Originally printed in a very limited number for the official use of the Admiralty War Staff in 1914-15, it has not yet seen the wider circulation it deserves. Her Majesty's Stationery Office has granted us permission to publish this two-volume, 1,000-page study in a joint venture with the Naval War College Press and the U.S. Naval Institute Press. To make it possible in these difficult times, the Smith Richardson Foundation has made a generous grant that allows us to proceed.

To promote further study on Richmond as well as on the contributions of *The Naval Review*, we have added to the research collections of the Eccles Library at the Naval War College. We now have the only complete run of *The Naval Review* in the United States, through purchasing the set once owned by Rear-Admiral P.W. Brock, R.N.

Historians and the Navy.

A careful look at Corbett and Richmond, as a pair, allows us an opportunity to think more widely about the role of historians and the navy. Here we have Corbett, a civilian, and Richmond, a naval officer, both involved in studying maritime and naval history. We need to ask ourselves whether their civilian or uniformed character were different. Does it, or should it, make a difference? Often the naval historian within the navy serves as the keeper of a corporate memory in an institution notorious for forgetting its own experience. Yet, we must ask to what degree the historian in the employ of the navy is restricted in trying to answer the important but difficult and potentially embarrassing questions for the navy? Beyond that, we should ask what it is that the academic historian can do to help. What should the proper relationship be, in historical studies, between the university and the navy?

Turning to education within the navy, we may ask to what extent a historical understanding of the past is valuable to naval officers as they think about the future. More precisely, is it more important to use history as a tool for perceiving the elements that persistently recur in situations involving the use of armed force than for looking at it directly as a means of understanding the past? Thus, the question is whether the importance of history for the navy is one of substance or one of process, and to what extent the two can be separated.

The careers of Richmond and Corbett raise for us also questions about the different uses of history within a navy. We see that they wrote historical studies designed for use by a staff, in both war and peace. They edited documents for the Navy Records Society as foundation materials for further study and illumination. They were writing general histories that showed the role of the navy in

broad periods of history, and they were lecturing. Their lectures ranged from detailed considerations of a particular period for a university audience to lectures for young officers just learning about the heritage of their profession, as well as to senior officers at the staff and war college level and at the highest level of command. This enterprise, too, led further into the development of abstract considerations and a broad philosophical appreciation of naval and maritime affairs.

To my mind, this range of historical tasks illustrates the work that modern naval historians need to sustain as they simultaneously work within a naval service and maintain their professional connections with colleagues in the university and the academic world. Yet, simultaneous service to the public, to the nation, to the academic discipline of history, and to the navy raises intellectual stresses and strains we can easily find in the careers of both Corbett and Richmond. They give us, as historians, both an example and a warning.

Considerations for the future.

There is another aspect in the work of Corbett and Richmond for us to consider. So far, I have spoken of them as thinkers whose work contributes to a range of naval thought and literature, as historians grappling with the research issues and interpretations on specific periods of time; as actors within their own time; as historians contributing to the work of the navy, and as intellectuals within a bureaucratic system. Now, we should ask: what is it that Corbett and Richmond can contribute to present and future naval planning? To what degree is Corbett's *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* a useful guide for staff officers as they think about future contingencies? Do Richmond's thoughts on arms control provide us any inspiration or practical guidance to current arms control negotiations? Do his ideas on smaller capital ships provide any useful thoughts for future force structures during a period of stringent budgets? Do his ideas on the relationships between economic strength and naval power have relevance to modern situations? To reach a conclusion on these points, we need to relate our knowledge about Corbett and Richmond to the realities of naval staff planning. Then we can consider more carefully the prospects and the limitations for historical and theoretical insights for practical planners.

The work that Corbett and Richmond did in their time is particularly relevant to the aims and purposes for which the Naval War College exists. The founder defined this college as "a place of original research relating to all questions relating to war and to statesmanship connected with war, or the prevention of war."¹⁴ The study of history has always played an important part in that enterprise. Within this context, I hope that our meeting here today will make a further contribution, not only in more deeply appreciating the work of Corbett and

¹⁴ Stephen B. Luce, "An Address" in Hayes and Hattendorf, eds., *The Writings of Stephen B. Luce* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1975), pp. 39–40.

Richmond, but also in understanding the role of the historian in relation to the armed forces.

Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond and the Objects of Sea Power

Daniel A. Baugh

Herbert William Richmond was a career naval officer who made himself into a first-rate historian without recourse to formal training in history. Born in 1871, he entered the Royal Navy as a cadet in 1885 and by 1905 had advanced well in the profession. He had also developed a strong interest in naval history. With encouragement from Julian Corbett, he began to pursue archival research in 1907. Far from eschewing the dusty manuscript folios in the Public Record Office, Commander Richmond took to them with pleasure. By 1914 he completed the draft of a major monograph, *The Navy in the War of 1739-48*, though it was not put in final form for publication until after the war.¹ After his promotion to captain, he was appointed commanding officer of that famous battleship, HMS *Dreadnought*, in 1909.

The outbreak of the First World War found him at the Admiralty in the operations section, where he witnessed firsthand its limited capacity for strategic imagination and planning. It was part of Richmond's job to offer strategic advice and criticism, but his superiors, especially the First Lord, Winston Churchill, regarded him as impertinent. Soon and often thereafter, he was found guilty of the worst crime: being proved right by events.² Richmond left the Admiralty in April 1915 to become liaison officer to the Italian navy. After returning from Taranto in September, he was relegated to a backwater assignment. He thus had time for further study and writing, but in 1916 could only view his career prospects as dim. After the war the jobs would go to the fighting officers; his fate, he speculated in a letter to a friend, would be to spend his time doing naval history as a sort of retirement occupation: "I shall return to the quiet of the

¹ H.W. Richmond, *The Navy in the War of 1739-48*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1920).

² Barry Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, 1871-1946* (Waterloo, Ont., 1982), pp. 40-55. This book is the indispensable guide to Richmond's career. Most of Richmond's diary for the years 1909 to 1920 is published in Arthur J. Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral: The Life and Papers of Sir Herbert Richmond* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), which also offers a brief biographical introduction; see pp. 91-157 for Richmond's period at the Admiralty. The Admiralty's lack of imagination and coordinating skills are visible, for instance, in the mistakes which led to Admiral Cradock's fatal predicament off Coronel; see Jack Sweetman, "Coronel: Anatomy of a Disaster," in Gerald Jordan, ed., *Naval Warfare in the Twentieth Century, 1900-1945: Essays in Honour of Arthur Marder* (London, 1977), pp. 70-89.

Records Office.” Plainly, he did not feel ready for that yet. At this time his lifelong interest in naval education was powerfully revived and he began working with a handful of colleagues on proposals.³ But he never stopped sending suggestions and memoranda about current strategy to his many friends in positions of influence.

Thanks to the support of Admiral Sir David Beatty, however, Richmond was given a battleship command with the Grand Fleet in April 1917 and promoted to rear-admiral in 1920. During the twenties, his billets were those of a scholarly expert, except for one, the East Indies command in 1923–25. He was promoted to vice-admiral in 1925, knighted in 1926, and promoted to admiral in 1929. He resigned under Admiralty pressure in 1931. Three years later he was appointed Professor of Naval History at Cambridge and died while Master of Downing College, Cambridge, in 1946. From the 1920s to the time of his death, he produced a large *oeuvre* on naval topics, both current and historical: books, articles, lectures, and private memoranda of which quite a few were circulated among high-level naval and government staff.

This essay aims at comprehending the main tenets of Sir Herbert Richmond’s strategic thought. No attempt will be made to assess the impact of his ideas on subsequent decisions and events. In most cases, at least in any immediate sense, Richmond’s endeavors to win over the naval hierarchy to his views failed. The related question of how well Richmond predicted circumstances and needs of the next war will also be set aside. Rear-Admiral G.H. Thursfield believed that things would have gone a lot better in the Second World War if Richmond’s teachings had been more closely observed by “those in high places.”⁴ That may be. My own impression is that Richmond’s ideas about British naval preparedness and strategic needs stood up rather well, though certainly not in all respects. But exploring the question would involve a great many might-have-beens and a very different focus for the essay.

It must be granted at the outset that Richmond was not inclined to look ahead to new technological possibilities—a capacity which experts of our century generally stress when evaluating a military thinker’s reputation. Richmond was not a naval journalist, not a naval version of Sir Basil Liddell Hart, and therefore he did not have to be always commenting on the latest innovation. It would have been against his nature and outlook anyway. His annoyance with “new-era” claims is obvious to anyone who goes through his writings of the inter-war period. He recoiled at the extremism of futuristic prognostications—of which there were plenty in the twenties and thirties. Basically, he believed it was imprudent to bank on prescience. Wisdom lay in imaginative expectation

³ Churchill College Archives, Cambridge, Drax Papers 1/61: Richmond to Capt. Reginald Plunkett (later Drax), 21 July 1916.

⁴ A memoir by Thursfield is embedded in G.M. Trevelyan’s obituary of Richmond; see *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1946, p. 332.

disciplined by recollection of historical patterns—not just static patterns, but dynamic patterns too, in which not only weapons technology but other sorts of conditions changed. His desideratum was that naval officers and statesmen should have minds richly informed by a range of historical knowledge and be analytically prepared to make use of that knowledge in the light of current and expectable conditions.⁵

Consequently, any judgment of Richmond's reputation as a naval thinker has to rest in some measure on the quality of his historical research. A case can be made—a strong one in my opinion—that he stands at the top of the list of naval historians, if one weighs the attributes of a good historian: range, depth, grasp, clarity, and care in scholarship. There is a further quality to be noted. All historians, especially historians of warfare, delve into history with specific questions in mind. A distinguishing feature of Richmond's work, however, is that it reports things which, though he evidently did not quite fathom them, nevertheless seemed compelling to admirals and statesmen of the time. Implicitly, this shows a profound respect for the decision makers of the past; he stood as far away from the “what-fools-they-were” approach to naval and military history as anyone could. The people who conducted “the old wars” (Richmond's shorthand term for the sailing-ship era) were aware of lots of vital considerations that the modern age too easily forgot. For this reason, Richmond revered history: It was a treasure-house of wisdom. All wars, old and modern, contributed; a single war, however recent and significant, should not be allowed to dominate thinking.⁶

While there were plenty of military intellectuals writing about new weapons and weapons platforms, Richmond's focus was on something else—on strategic wisdom, which, he believed, could not be derived from technology. It was derived by “scientific” consideration of historical experience. Anyone “who would introduce a new creed” of sea power had to have “reasoned grounds.” Those grounds must

. . . reside in the principles of war, and those principles are to be discovered in the history of war, which, as I believe, those whose business it is to direct policy, or whose ambition it is to influence opinion, should study as a preliminary to the formation of an opinion. Knowledge does not come intuitively in the science of war, nor does capacity in the art. The source of knowledge is experience, either that of one's self or of others. Profiting by the use of such experience as is

⁵ He commented to an expert friend in 1916 on how the presumptuousness of authority and “our neglect to use History as a means of fostering the imaginative & deductive sides of our minds are at the root . . . of our failure to visualize the progress of the war in advance.” Pollen Papers, Richmond correspondence: Richmond to Arthur Joseph Hungerford Pollen, 27 March 1916. I owe this and other items I shall cite from the Pollen Papers [all from the Richmond file] to the generosity of Mr. Anthony Pollen and Prof. Jon Tetsuro Sumida.

⁶ See especially, “The Uses of History,” pp. 279–93, in H.W. Richmond, *National Policy and Naval Strength and Other Essays* (London, 1928). “All periods are our oyster,” p. 284.

obtainable, one may begin to consider the use and influence of, and the reactions and adjustments resulting from, the introduction of new weapons; . . . so that [if another war comes] we may be in a position to make the most efficient, which is another way of saying the most economical, use of the national weapons with which . . . we are obliged to furnish ourselves.⁷

In one respect Richmond's strategic thought is easy to study. His basic outlook and approach did not change much from early 1915 onwards. Yet in another respect the task is difficult. Except when he was writing the histories, his pen was mostly actuated by an important issue at hand, and his analytical talents were often best exhibited in writings of this kind. He clearly—there is evidence—felt a kinship with the spirit and intellectual approach of Edmund Burke, but unlike Burke, who let his mind run extravagantly and wonderfully from the issue at hand to a disquisition, Richmond usually stayed close to his immediate purpose. It is thus all the more regrettable that he never produced a formal treatise on naval strategy.

Interestingly, it appears that he had hoped to do so. In 1936, he told his old friend Arthur Pollen that he hoped to write three books. First, he was “working on an outline of British strategy from Elizabeth to 1918, with special reference to the Statesman's problem of how he would use the sea & land power he had at his disposal, & how the strategy worked out in practice.”⁸ This book he completed. It was first presented in 1943 as the Ford Lectures at Oxford, and was published, with the account carried down to 1945, as *Statesmen and Sea Power*. It is undoubtedly his most important book and is still in many ways the best survey of the subject.⁹ “When that's done in a year or so,” he continued, “I want to see what I can make of a book on strategy, in more or less the abstract; & (if I still live) I should like to add one more to the pestilential books on the war, for I believe we really learned very little from it.”¹⁰ Because the historical project occupied the rest of his life rather than “a year or so,” he never got to the book on strategy nor to the book on the First World War. My attempt here to codify some of Sir Herbert Richmond's strategic ideas probably—hopefully—explores topics which would have been prominent in the two books which he was unable to write.

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Although Richmond always insisted that the experience of a single war should never be allowed to dominate strategic thinking, his personal involvement in

⁷ From the concluding paragraph of H.W. Richmond, “Sea Warfare,” in Sir George Aston, ed., *The Study of War: For Statesmen and Citizens* (London, 1927), p. 118.

⁸ Pollen Papers: Richmond to Pollen, November 1936.

⁹ H.W. Richmond, *Statesmen and Sea Power* (Oxford, 1946).

¹⁰ Pollen Papers: loc. cit.

the First World War is of immense interest to the study of sea power. A mature serving officer, whose mind was already stocked with a good deal of naval history in 1914, he was, with few exceptions, sharply critical of the Admiralty's direction of it throughout. What struck him most was the narrowness of strategic imagination. His private war diary amply records his sense of disgust and frustration.

As noted above, he was not shy about offering his opinions during the early months, the main effect being to annoy his superiors. After 1915, the person with the greatest influence in naval matters was Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, who disagreed fundamentally with Richmond's approach to practically everything. Jellicoe considered Richmond's authorship of a memorandum as sufficient ground for judging it worthless. Richmond was not without other recourse. Colonel Maurice Hankey, a Marine officer who served in a civil capacity as secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence and the War Cabinet, was closely in touch with high-level deliberations on policy throughout the war. Richmond got on well with him and sent him suggestions; they admired each other's expertise and commonly agreed on policy and strategy. In fact, it is fair to describe them as co-conspirators on behalf of an intelligent fashioning of strategy and policy both during and after the war. Hankey, however, had plenty of his own frustration in trying to get new ideas accepted during the 1914–18 war, and he had no leverage at all with the navy. With respect to naval matters, the mere suspicion that a proposal of Hankey's might have been inspired by Richmond was enough to make Jellicoe hostile.¹¹ Admiral Sir David Beatty, who replaced Jellicoe as commander of the Grand Fleet in December 1916, was an exception—for Richmond, the most important exception imaginable. He read Richmond's proposals with interest, and after Richmond took command of HMS *Conqueror* at Scapa Flow, Beatty sought him out for advice. Naturally, Beatty had to avoid mentioning Richmond's name if it was connected with any proposal sent on to the Admiralty while Jellicoe was First Sea Lord.

Beatty's elevation combined with other circumstances to improve Richmond's career prospects. Although Richmond had no doubt that Jellicoe would continue to banish him from any significant post, two matters which generated intense controversy outside as well as inside the navy began in late 1916 to eat away at Jellicoe's supremacy. One was the question of whether he had missed a great opportunity to pursue and destroy the German High Seas Fleet at Jutland; the other was the mounting loss of merchant shipping to German

¹¹ E.g., Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 68. Stephen Roskill, in *Hankey, Man of Secrets: Volume I, 1877–1918* (London, 1970), p. 42, conveyed the impression that Hankey mistrusted Richmond personally on grounds of attitude and behavior. His evidence is speculative, and as for their letters being “confined entirely to naval policy and strategy,” as if to imply that their relations were coldly businesslike, that was not the case. See National Maritime Museum, Greenwich: Richmond Papers [cited hereafter NMM] RIC/7/3 d. and RIC/7/4 (H.). Hankey's wariness of Richmond was, as Roskill also suggests, due to the bad relations between Richmond and the Admiralty; that did not necessarily imply any personal mistrust on Hankey's part.

submarine attacks. Regarding the latter, Richmond sent a memorandum to Grand Fleet headquarters in December; he received a promising reply from Commander Roger M. Bellairs which included the comment: "I fully agree with your remarks on convoy protection and have at once put the whole matter before the Chief of the Staff for him to take action on."¹² The alarming escalation of the shipping crisis after Germany adopted unrestricted submarine warfare on 1 February 1917 was surely the main cause of Richmond's rehabilitation. Jellicoe was trying to solve the problem, but his thoughts, and those of his entourage, were focused on new weapons and ships. All that would take too much time. The navy needed ideas.¹³

Richmond had a comprehensive and exact knowledge of how the navy's system of trade protection in the eighteenth century had worked. Corbett, unfortunately, had lacked this knowledge. He was also aware of the favorable results of convoying troop transports and colliers during the current war. He was not the only officer to urge the use of convoy, and it must be said that at this time he does not appear to have grasped the full extent of a convoy's inherent advantages. On certain issues, however, he was emphatic: (1) except for certain narrow sea-lanes and approach points where shipping was congested and patrols would be useful, the available escorts should be employed in convoy work; (2) the safe arrival of merchant ships was the true object, not the sinking of U-boats; (3) the proportion of light cruisers and destroyers being devoted to trade protection in this time of crisis was far too small. He also worked out, with eighteenth-century history as his guide, the most efficient strategy for employing larger warships to protect the smaller escort vessels against the possibility of a concentrated enemy surface attack.¹⁴

Even before the shipping losses mounted ominously, Richmond's mind explored ways in which small ships could be reassigned. Over 100 destroyers were in the North Sea to serve the Grand Fleet and to defend the coasts. It would be better to bring additional battleships, including French battleships, to the

¹² NMM RIC/1/15 (letter inserted in the diary pages): Roger M. Bellairs to Richmond, 5 Jan. 1917, acknowledging Richmond's memorandum of 28 Dec. 1916. See also Marder, *Portrait*, p. 384.

¹³ Even Arthur Pollen, whose interest in improved weaponry was intense, urged the initiating of new tactical and strategic methods rather than casting around for technological solutions. Pollen wrote to the prime minister's private secretary on 29 April 1917: "It is, I believe a complete fallacy to suppose that the solution of the submarine problem depends upon the perfection of any one form of device or trick. . . . Without right direction no new devices will help us at all. With right direction the means already at our disposal could do incalculably more. . ."; quoted in Anthony Pollen, *The Great Gunnery Scandal: The Mystery of Jutland* (London, 1980), p. 211. On Pollen's achievements in naval technology and frustrations in dealing with the Admiralty, see Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy: Finance, Technology, and British Naval Policy, 1889-1914* (London and Boston, 1989).

¹⁴ See especially NMM RIC/14/1: Nov. 1916 and 13 Feb. 1917. Also Churchill College, Drax Papers 1/61, enclosing Capt. W.S. Chalmers's abstract of a Richmond memorandum on defense of trade against submarines, 4 April 1916. In NMM RIC/13/3, a paper on trade protection dated 1913 and a lecture dealing with surface-force concentrations dated Nov. 1917 are both packed with historical data.

North Sea and, thus, use sheer weight of metal to discourage the German fleet from gambling. His reasoning was:

The High Sea fleet is as surely sapping our trade as if its ships were out on the trade routes. It is precisely what they intended to do as Prince Bülow shews in his book, & we are playing the game they require us to play. . . . Can it be said that we *must* have 100 [destroyers] with the Grand fleet; that we risk defeat unless we have that number; and that trade, which it is the prime function of the navy to protect, must be allowed to suffer for want of protection?¹⁵

The Admiralty's reassignment of destroyers was minimal, and, as is well known, its resistance to mercantile convoy was obdurate. The anxiety and bafflement of the men in charge was evident to everyone in the navy and in government, yet only at the end of April did they reach a decision to experiment with convoying mercantile trade. Because responses were excruciatingly slow, the prime minister still had good reason to shake things up. He resorted to back-door consulting, his naval go-between being a young lieutenant commander, Joseph M. Kenworthy.

Kenworthy's conversation with Lloyd George on 14 May was arranged by the press baron, Lord Northcliffe, who was also present. It included the following exchange:

Prime Minister: Where does the weak point lie?

Cdr. Kenworthy: The weakness appears to be in the Operations Division. You have not got men there who have studied the higher side of war.

Prime Minister: Well, I know Oliver is sticky. . . . Now tell me, Commander Kenworthy, who are the good men?

Cdr. Kenworthy: Undoubtedly the best of them is Richmond.

Prime Minister: Now, his name has been several times mentioned to me. I have put his name to the Admiralty and they tell me that he is only a paper man.

Cdr. Kenworthy: I suppose that means he has been a student of naval war all his life, but he is a great leader as well. . . .

Northcliffe: Now, P.M., why couldn't you take a man like Richmond on to your secretariat? . . .

Prime Minister: Could I do that?

Northcliffe: Of course. You are Prime Minister of England. You could do it with a stroke of your pen.

Prime Minister: Well, I will make a note of that.¹⁶

¹⁵ NMM RIC/1/15, 23 Dec. 1916, inserted in the diary, not printed in Marder, *Portrait*, but see *Portrait*, p. 235 (20 Feb. 1917) for his idea of massing more battleships.

¹⁶ Kenworthy saw the prime minister upon Northcliffe's urging and they entered 10 Downing Street on 14 May literally by the back door. He had a second interview with Lloyd George on 20 May, in

Lloyd George was not inclined, however, to risk so drastic a confrontation. He was extremely wary of the Admiralty's power. The most that came of it for Richmond was that, in June, he was absent from his ship for conversations with the prime minister and the First Lord of the Admiralty concerning Admiralty reorganization.¹⁷ Such conversations were more of a hazard to his career than a help, and he knew it.

Although the early months of 1917 were an exciting time for him—the most exciting since the closing months of 1914—they were an anxious and worrying time, too. Would the navy recover its senses in time to stave off a looming national disaster? How could the men in charge of operations be brought to change their ways unless they were pestered, or perhaps undermined? As for himself, did he dare revive his career hopes? How could he continue to urge the redirection of policy and strategy without being considered insubordinate? In mid-March he pondered the personal choice he faced:

I suppose on hard & fast lines it is entirely wrong for me to express opinions or make suggestions. I have no doubt whatever that I should be condemned for doing it. How far ought one to suppress one's views in matters one feels to be of national importance? Especially if experience has shewn that the directing intelligence at headquarters is not an inspiring one. Suppose in after-years I were talking of this & saying that I had, at the time, always hoped an attempt would be made to do this, that or the other, and I should be asked, 'Well, then, why did you not suggest it?' What answer could I make?¹⁸

which he gave examples of some of Richmond's strategic ideas. He wound up by saying: "If you could put a Captain in a sufficiently strong position Richmond is THE man." P.M.: "Yes. They say he is only good on paper." Kenworthy: "Well, that is their way of belittling him. I know him as a man who has studied war and naval history in particular very deeply." The episode and both conversations (as Kenworthy recollected them immediately afterwards) are recorded in Joseph M. Kenworthy (later Baron Strabolgi), *Sailors, Statesmen, and Others: An Autobiography* (London, 1933), pp. 70–82. Richmond's name throughout this printed version is represented by three dots. Anyone who doubts where his name applies may consult a manuscript copy of the conversations interleaved in Richmond's diary (NMM RIC 1/15) which matches almost word for word. Moreover, Richmond copied out a letter "Strab" sent to him at Scapa Flow reporting the gist; this letter (25 May) is written in metaphorical terms as if the discussions had concerned a private company's "water transport business"; it therefore reads amusingly. I find it puzzling that Arthur Marder did not mention any of this in *Portrait*. It should be noted that Kenworthy served under Richmond in HMS *Commonwealth* (1915–17). But see Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, pp. 63–64, and Roskill, *Hankey*, vol. I, p. 397.

¹⁷ Marder's printed rendition of the manuscript diary inexplicably leaves out a great deal which relates to this exciting moment in Richmond's career, but it does cover Richmond's talks with Lloyd George and Sir Edward Carson. *Portrait*, pp. 253–60. The day after Sir Edward Carson spoke with Richmond, he sent a confidential letter to his First Sea Lord, on 17 June, suggesting that the Admiralty appeared to need a section for planning offensive operations but making no mention of Richmond's name. Jellicoe knew, however, that Lloyd George and Carson had spoken with Richmond and in his remarks attached to the letter blamed Hankey for arranging this outside "interference." While noting Jellicoe's annoyance, it is also interesting to note that at this moment Jellicoe was prepared, however reluctantly, to appoint Richmond as the new section's head: "The sooner Captain Richmond is appointed, the better," Jellicoe wrote. A. Temple Patterson, ed., *The Jellicoe Papers*, vol. 2, (Navy Records Society volume 111) (London, 1968), pp. 166–68.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 236–37, 13 March 1917.

The question was of course rhetorical and Richmond's manner of answering it accounts for his being so often in hot water with the authorities:

I should feel that I had neglected to do my duty. . . . The system which denies officers opportunity to think or express ideas is unsound. . . . I hate this slavish habit of naval officers & this false idea of loyalty, which is generally not loyalty at all, but cowardice.¹⁹

There were times when he carried his "duty" to express ideas too far, but the year 1917 was not one of them.²⁰

Richmond's developing critique of the British navy's wartime strategy is best approached by remembering that the war generated two great naval controversies. One is the Jutland controversy. At the end of the day, on 31 May 1916, the Grand Fleet had the High Seas Fleet in a position of being cut off from its home base and substantially overmatched in total ordnance. But the Germans escaped the noose and returned to port. The battle attracted immense public attention, and although many facts were not known, it appeared obvious that Admiral Jellicoe had proceeded cautiously. This gave rise to a strategic debate. Those who defended the admiral reminded their readers that his caution was amply justified by broad considerations. Their opponents, the "Victory School," blamed him for harboring, perhaps unconsciously, a false strategic doctrine. This false doctrine—that the navy's fundamental purpose was to defend sea-communications rather than do battle—was commonly attributed to Corbett. It had allegedly crept into British naval thinking just before the war. The true doctrine was Mahan's.²¹

Richmond had formed some private views but avoided this debate. For one thing, he did not like it. Much as he had reason to resent Jellicoe personally, he believed—recalling a good deal of naval history, no doubt—that no fleet

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Professor Hunt has judged Richmond and the other "Young Turks" to be "their own worst enemies. Outspoken and abrasive, uncompromising and intolerant, they were branded as "difficult men" and shunted away" to unpromising billets (*Sailor-Scholar*, p. 40). This assessment of their manners and methods recurs throughout his two chapters on the 1914–18 period (and elsewhere in the book too), while at the same time approval is given of nearly all Richmond's ideas and suggestions. As for abrasiveness and intolerance, it is relevant to bear in mind that Richmond served in many ships over a long career, and there is no evidence of his being anything but an effective and well-liked officer. Although his attitude was often critical, and he was known throughout the navy as a man who spoke his mind, the question of whether he was tactless and vitriolic in his professional dealings should not be judged on the basis of his diary and letters, which were certainly not written for early publication and possibly not for publication at all. Anyone who has held a position of responsibility knows how much easier it is to criticize from the sidelines, and Richmond's unending criticisms and suggestions were undoubtedly annoying, but in 1917 when the Admiralty's stubborn conduct fortified its intellectual paralysis, informed criticisms and suggestions were in order.

²¹ Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, pp. 58–60. See also Arthur J. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow: The Royal Navy in the Fisher Era, 1904–1919*, vol. 3, 2nd ed., (Oxford, 1978), pp. 314–20.

commander's conduct in battle could be judged until many things were known, not least the orders and instructions by which he was governed. Until those facts were known, criticism was useless and harmful.²² A second reason was that he did not fully subscribe to either side's postulation of correct strategic doctrine. His opinion was that both sides were misconstruing what Corbett had said about sea communications, an opinion that will be better understood when we come to examine the general theory of naval strategy which he developed after the war.

The other controversy was on a related issue. It concerned the centrality of battle and battle fleets to sea power, an issue on which Corbett had tried to focus theoretical attention before the war. In April 1915, as the possibility of a major sea battle receded, Richmond began to focus intensively on the basic question of what Great Britain, as the dominant sea power, should be trying to do with her navy in this war.

In mid-February 1915 he had already become uneasy about the general course of British strategy. He drafted a paper which he sent to Hankey. It began:

We have now a more complete command of the sea, so far as the waters outside the range of submarines are concerned, than we have possessed in any previous maritime war, and yet we are making less of its special advantages than we ever did.²³

The thrust of the paper was that the eastern Mediterranean currently provided excellent opportunities where British military forces could use the leverage afforded by sea mobility. These opportunities should be seized before the Germans could put submarines in the Mediterranean.²⁴ Obviously he favored the Dardanelles expedition, but he was adamant that it should be a properly planned combined operation.²⁵ He continued to recommend certain combined operations in the Mediterranean theater throughout the war—none of them large—which presented opportunities for high-yield strategic results in comparison with their resource costs.

In April, the character of his strategic thought became more comprehensive and analytical. Reporting a conversation with Admiral Sir Henry Oliver, Admiralty Chief of Staff, he wrote in his diary: "I do not now look upon the Fleet as being a

²² Privately, in his diary and letters, he speculated that Jellicoe's fleet orders were too rigid (they were), and that the British destroyers were excessively devoted to the defensive role of shielding the capital ships. Richmond's refusal to join in the howling attack on Jellicoe's conduct as a fighting admiral calls in question the severity of Professor Hunt's remark that Richmond "helped to assassinate Jellicoe," *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 158; the real "assassins" were those who stirred the Jutland issue. The remark also runs contrary to his account of Richmond's position during the 1920–22 controversy over the official history of Jutland, pp. 102, 115–19.

²³ Marder, *Portrait*, pp. 142–45: "Remarks on Present Strategy," 14 Feb. 1915.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 140, 9 Feb. 1915. Richmond's objection to the Dardanelles operation was not strategic; it was based solely on the need for trained soldiers, dual-force planning, and surprise, none of which were characteristic of Churchill's scheme. Richmond's advice made Churchill furious.

body merely for attacking the High Seas Fleet & having a battle wherever it can pull one off. I consider that it is an investing body, blockading Germany, & that if the Germans are getting hungry or short of supplies," they must come out and destroy it. Thus the British fleet could choose "the battle-ground" and should not risk going into "the Heligoland Bight just for the sake of a battle." He followed this up with a memorandum to Hankey. It concluded: "To sacrifice all these advantages to bring the German High Sea Fleet to action quickly" would be absurd if the Germans were thereby able to fight in surroundings favorable to themselves, where they could prepare for the contest "by preliminary work with mines & submarines most easily" and their shorter-range vessels could be brought into action. "It is inconceivable that we should do anything so contrary to our interests, whether they are considered from the points of view of grand strategy, minor strategy, or tactics, as to abandon a blockade merely in order to bring about a battle under unfavourable conditions to ourselves."²⁶ Undoubtedly, this line of thinking was provoked by proposals for basing the fleet further south. But the change in Richmond's perspective was permanent: "Command of the sea is only useful for the end it serves," he wrote in early August, and increasingly he stressed that the British navy's main object was to tighten the economic blockade of Germany. "As far as actual effect of an [*sic*] trade attack is concerned, I don't think we have ever squeezed an enemy so hard as we are now squeezing Germany," and because the potential effect on the war could be very great, he concluded that the government's caution with respect to neutral opinion was excessive.²⁷

He still held this view a year later:

It is absolutely necessary to look at the war as a whole, and to avoid being parochial & keeping our eyes on the German Fleet only. What we have to do is to starve & cripple *Germany*, to destroy *Germany*. That is our prime object. The destruction of the German Fleet is a means to an end and not an end in itself. If in endeavouring to destroy the German Fleet we run risks which may prejudice our success in the greater object of the destruction of Germany, those risks are too great.

As an afterthought he added that instead of focusing on the battle with the German Fleet one might "free ships for active operations, offensive, in the regions where they can do service and assist the common cause."²⁸

Just at the time the above was written at the end of August 1916, the defensive aspect of sea power began to require serious attention. Earlier in 1916, Richmond had remarked that fixation on the German fleet meant that the navy did not have

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 151–54.

²⁷ Marder, *Portrait*, p. 187: "Considerations as to the War," 2 Aug. 1915. See also, pp. 195–96 (11 Oct.), and p. 198 (24 Nov.). Churchill College, Drax Papers 1/61: Richmond to Plunkett, 15 Aug. 1916.

²⁸ Marder, *Portrait*, pp. 219–20, 29 August 1916.

“enough destroyers to convoy shipping & defend it against submarines, nor enough cruisers to protect trade” from surface raiders.²⁹ He regarded trade defense as a vital object. When shipping losses reached crisis proportions in the first half of 1917, the navy’s leaders said they agreed but scarcely made any moves. Richmond was furious: Cruisers are so “tied to the Grand Fleet that trade is left to take its chance” (19 Jan.). “But the Admiralty are still all for Armageddon, while they fail to see that we can ensure both Armageddon and the trade routes by co-ordination of the Allied Fleets” (4 Feb.). “I cannot help thinking that they think naval war consists in one glorious battle between fleets, and these trifles like trade defence are unfortunate interruptions” (20 Feb.). “[E]very destroyer ought to be out . . . on trade protection service” (4 May). “It was characteristic of men ignorant of war,” he told Sir Edward Carson, “that everything centred in one great battle, that trade did not matter so much as keeping the ships of war undamaged” (6 June).³⁰

On one plane, these remarks were unfair, because by the spring of 1917 the Admiralty was desperate to find a solution. Yet there was an essential truth in them. Prewar naval budgets had been devoted chiefly to building capital ships for the very purpose of winning a great sea battle, and during the war the Grand Fleet’s needs persisted in dominating naval procurement and deployment—just as the Western Front fixation dominated the arrangements of the British army. The result was a massive, expensive concentration of naval force whose radius of action was sharply curtailed by fear of torpedoes and mines. It simply awaited battle; it absorbed the best the navy had; nothing significant could be detached from it lest preponderance be compromised. Offensively, therefore, the navy accomplished only one great object, the economic blockade, whose actual execution did not require much active naval force. Defensively, there developed the worst disaster in British maritime history: unacceptable shipping losses which persisted for more than a year. The truth was that this navy, thus organized and dedicated, could offer no effective counter to the onslaught by the German submarines. The appalling emptiness of British “command of the sea” was fully exposed. In Richmond’s view, the situation did not arise from technological circumstances. It arose from wrong ideas about strategy.

II

In the last months of the war, Richmond began to systematize some basic principles of naval strategy. From that time forward, he recorded his thoughts in many places: in letters, memoranda, lectures, and published essays. Most notable is a pair of lectures he was invited to give in early 1926 for a series sponsored by the University of London. These two lectures on “Sea Warfare” occupy more than

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 203, 4 March 1916.

³⁰ Marder, *Portrait*, pp. 228–36, 247, 259.

one-third of the published series, *The Study of War*. Richmond's little book entitled *Naval Warfare*, published in 1930, is a reprinting of them.³¹ They were addressed to a distinguished audience. Replete with historical examples, they are the closest thing to a treatise on naval strategy that he ever wrote. There is a more abstract and less comprehensive treatment in a chapter titled "The Strength of Navies" in *Economy and Naval Security* (1931).³² It should also be noted that he put some of his general scheme on paper as early as June 1918, when he wrote an unpublished lecture entitled "The Functions of the Royal Navy."³³ Over the dozen years spanned by these works, his approach and essential concepts remained the same and the discussion below will use them accordingly.

Richmond's starting point was to conceive of the navy as an instrument. The philosophical turn of his mind is revealed by the importance he attached to this basic premise.³⁴ In 1931 he wrote to Pollen:

I find reading Samuel Butler's notebook, that I have—unconsciously—plagiarized him. In the beginning of my chapter about "what determines the size of navies &c" I have said that a navy is an instrument, designed for a purpose; & when that purpose is clearly known to the designer, it—the navy or the ship—will be useful.

Butler (to my delight) says the same thing, though much better. Thus:—"A tool is anything whatsoever which is used by an intelligent being for realising its object. *The idea of a desired end is inseparable from a tool.*"³⁵

Implicitly one needed to know the purpose or function: "What, then, is the function of a navy?" His answer: "to prevent pressure from being brought to bear upon its nationals." He proceeded:

There are two ways, and two only, by which a country may be forced to surrender rights or territories to which it attributes importance. Pressure may be brought upon its people by the invasion of its territories, or some parts of its territories; or by the cutting off of that external traffic by means of which it maintains its national life.³⁶

By "national life" he meant not only economic resources capable of sustaining a military effort, but also systems of political communication and control. The

³¹ "Sea Warfare," in Aston, ed., *Study of War* [cited in note 7], pp. 45–118. H.W. Richmond, *Naval Warfare* (London, 1930).

³² H.W. Richmond, *Economy and Naval Security* (London, 1931), chapter 1, pp. 49–88.

³³ NMM RIC/13/3: "The Functions of the Royal Navy" (June 1918), especially pp. 4, 8–9, 15, 26.

³⁴ His last book was entitled *The Navy as an Instrument of Policy, 1558–1727*, published posthumously, ed. by E.A. Hughes (Cambridge, 1953).

³⁵ Pollen Papers: Richmond to Pollen, 7 April 1931. The italics are Richmond's; he was referring to chapter 1 of *Economy*.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 50–51. It is evident from the phrasing and framing here and elsewhere that this work of 1931 assumes a defensive perspective, in keeping with British national security debates at the time.

two ways of bringing pressure were assault and investment: he drew upon the analogy of capturing a fortress.³⁷

A preliminary outline of these ideas may be found in the unpublished lecture of 1918. In 1920, assault and investment were mentioned as organizing categories in the Lord Rector's inaugural address to Edinburgh University, which was printed in a university magazine. There is a story here which has a bearing on Richmond's career and is worth a digression. The address was delivered by Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty, but aside from the beginning and ending it was written by Richmond. The fact is certain because, after delivering it, Beatty wrote a letter to Richmond, thanking him for sending a helpful paper the preceding April and remarking that, as Richmond would see, he had made extensive use of it. Indeed he had. The main part of Beatty's address is word for word from the paper, except for a few omitted passages. I presume that Richmond welcomed the opportunity to assist Beatty in this way and never breathed a word about it to anyone. But Beatty's letter, some tear-sheets from the university magazine which Beatty sent him, and a carbon typescript of Richmond's paper may be found together among Richmond's papers for posterity.³⁸ Beatty was at this time First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff. Richmond was on the list of those promoted to rear-admiral in December 1920.

Assault and investment—this is rudimentary military thought and of itself cannot be considered impressive, but as a point of departure for analyzing *naval* strategy, it enabled Richmond to conceive of strategic objects in a certain way, and thus led to results as far-reaching as they were original. Richmond's analysis linked objects to pressure: Basically the objects of naval strategy consist of putting pressure on the enemy, whether by assault or investment, and reducing the enemy's capacity to relieve that pressure or to put pressure on oneself. Particular objects which may serve to achieve these two large objects are the true components of grand strategy. That was his formulation. After reviewing Liddell Hart's *The British Way in Warfare*, Richmond said in a private letter to the author that his only serious criticism concerned the last chapter, "The Concentrated Essence of War." The criticism was: "You don't say as much as I should have liked you to say about the object. To my mind, the object dominates everything & can't be left undiscussed whether we treat of Grand Strategy, Major & Minor Strategy, or Tactics. There is the object *of* a battle and the object *in* a battle—different things."³⁹ By "object of a battle" he did not mean a concrete

³⁷ "Sea Warfare," *Study of War*, p. 52. In *Economy*, he used the word "invasion" instead of "assault."

³⁸ NMM RIC/7/4 (B.). This address, which Beatty presented in October 1920, was also printed under Lord Beatty's name as "Lord Rector's Address," *The Naval Review* X (1922), pp. 455–65. Rear-Admiral William S. Chalmers, in *The Life and Letters of David, Earl Beatty* (London, 1951), also printed it in full, pp. 454–66.

³⁹ King's College, London, Liddell Hart papers, 1/598: Richmond to Liddell Hart, 7 Sept. 1932. See also Richmond's review of B.H. Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare* (London, 1932) in *The Naval Review*, XX (1932), p. 799, where he stated that Liddell Hart had left out the "one essential thing . . . : the selection of the object."

objective, so much as the strategic advantage to be gained or disadvantage to be avoided.

According to his formulation, the objects of sea power in Britain's case could be broken down as follows. First, under the heading of *assault*: Defensively, the navy's most important object when the threat existed was to prevent an invasion of the British Isles. Peripheral territories, whether allied or imperial, might also be considered in need of protection. In defending against invasion the navy should not adopt a merely passive stance, waiting to pounce on the invaders. Active measures might include strikes against the enemy's marshalling points, or perhaps the sort of initiative the British navy took in autumn 1755, when it preemptively corralled French merchant vessels so that they could not serve as troop transports.⁴⁰ Offensively, the navy, possessing sufficient command of the sea, must prepare itself to work with soldiers and marines. Objects might include: sustaining military operations in the main theater; launching diversionary operations; securing islands or regions which could be used to threaten an opponent's vital communications; and capturing enemy bases to reduce the scope of his sea power. The last, and sometimes the third, were maritime objects.

Time and again Richmond reminded his colleagues that the navy's assault capabilities were usually exercised in conjunction with ground forces. Although his studies focused on naval strategy, he always insisted that the only way to fight a war strongly and efficiently was to require all the armed services—indeed all allied forces—to plan and act cooperatively. He deplored the manner in which strategic planning had remained compartmentalized within each service during the First World War and the failure of statesmen to impose cooperation; British leaders of the eighteenth century had done a better job. Of course, this insistence on “the principle of the cooperation of arms”⁴¹ won him no friends either in his own service or in the army (or, later, the air force).

Under the heading of *investment*, the essential defensive task, especially for the British Empire, was to prevent the enemy from putting serious pressure on its maritime supply lines. During the twenties and thirties, Richmond repeatedly referred to the need to defend the Empire's shipping and to organize an imperial naval effort accordingly. While it is true that the empire was not an economic unit, British shipping and imperial trade, in the totality of its connections, continued to represent impressive and vital resources. Moreover, he realized that soldiers were the most precious imperial cargo (as the Second World War demonstrated).⁴² Between the wars, practically everyone in Britain who thought about national security agreed, in principle, as to the vital importance of this object. The difficulty lay in getting the senior admirals to give it actual priority.

⁴⁰ *Economy*, p. 74.

⁴¹ “Sea Warfare,” *Study of War*, pp. 80, 102.

⁴² See generally H.W. Richmond, *Imperial Defence and Capture at Sea in War* (London, 1932).

Offensively, under the heading of investment, the dominant sea power could contrive to prevent reinforcement of an enemy army in a peripheral theater—a capability which had been emphasized by Corbett. But in modern times, a greater object had come to the fore. This was the economic blockade of the enemy homeland: building up pressure on his “national life.”⁴³ Richmond recognized that, against a considerable land power, not much could be achieved by naval force alone. Suitable allies were indispensable and the diplomatic handling of neutral countries had to be both firm and carefully calculated. These were unalterable facts and, here, Richmond’s analysis of the roles played by neutrals is especially penetrating.⁴⁴ Yet, although the utility of this object varied from war to war, Richmond had no doubt of its importance in a major contest, particularly for Great Britain. If Britain’s ability to apply economic pressure by sea were taken away, the

power, which, as the history of all our great wars past and last plainly shows, has been the basis of an alliance value, has contributed materially towards compelling compliance upon an enemy, and without which, so far as it is possible to judge, the Entente could not have been victorious in the late war, would be gone. . . . To abolish the power of investment by sea, while leaving it untouched on land, is the negation of logic. Moreover, to take from a maritime power the right to exercise pressure in this manner leaves her with no offensive weapon except the only alternative measure of enforcing pressure—assault. Assault calls for military forces; and unless this country is to depart from the policy which has carried it successfully through three centuries it must either become a military nation or make war, as no one has ever yet made it, by defensive measures alone.⁴⁵

This passage, written in 1926, reveals how fully he was prepared, intellectually and emotionally, to combat the idea that Great Britain should abandon maritime “belligerent rights.”⁴⁶ It also raises a fundamental question about the orientation of British grand strategy. But, before taking up his view of that question, it is necessary to consider one object which is notably missing from the program set forth above.

⁴³ E.g., the June 1918 lecture: “. . . the navy has, as one of its functions, that of bringing pressure upon the national life of the enemy.”

⁴⁴ See especially H.W. Richmond, *Sea Power in the Modern World* (New York, 1934), pp. 87–106.

⁴⁵ “Sea Warfare,” *Study of War*, p. 87.

⁴⁶ In 1929, Richmond wrote some sophisticated and sharply reasoned memoranda on “belligerent rights” in respect to neutral trade for a subcommittee of the cabinet, to stave off Colonel E.M. House’s campaign for “freedom of the seas.” He thus helped stiffen the government’s resolve to ride off, once again, and finally, the American demand. In consequence, Great Britain began the Second World War without legal handcuffs on her capacity to limit neutral trade with the enemy. Professor Barry Hunt has done full justice to this episode; see Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, pp. 175–88. Hankey, who as Cabinet Secretary dexterously coordinated the effort, termed one of the longer papers Richmond sent him “the famous Memo” NMM RIC/7/3 d.: Hankey to Richmond, 29 Jan. 1929; see also 25 Jan. 1929. It is printed, under the title “The Freedom of the Seas,” in *The Naval Review*, XVII (May 1929), pp. 221–36.

This is the object on which the naval hierarchy was unswervingly intent: destroying the enemy's battle fleet. Richmond disagreed with those who argued that concentrations of capital ships were things of the past. If the enemy formed such a force, it would put all naval operations within reach at hazard, and one could not safely rely on torpedoes, mines, or bombs to contain it.⁴⁷ He was even prepared to say that the superior navy should "disable" the enemy concentration as soon as possible—render it "unable to oppose," not necessarily destroy it. This might be done by a combination of measures, such as positioning a strong countering force, and reducing the scope of harmful action by seizing the enemy's outlying bases. What he would not say was that bringing the enemy force to combat was an "ultimate object," much less *the* ultimate object.⁴⁸ Successful combat might wonderfully facilitate the superior navy's general exercise of sea power, but that should not necessarily take precedence over, nor be confused with, the true objects of sea power, the securing of which required separate plans and preparations, and usually different kinds of ships.

We can see how strongly Richmond felt about this in a correspondence he carried on with retired Admiral Sir Reginald Custance in 1920. Custance, an adherent of the "Victory School," was trying to develop "a theory of war" and hoped Richmond and he could agree on fundamentals. He wrote to Richmond:

Thus our formula would read: 'In war at sea the primary military aim of each side is to destroy the opposing armed ships and attendant air craft in battle or combat.' . . . Thus, the armed ships and attendant aircraft are the dominating factor and every operation should be directed to destroy, or to neutralize, or to weaken those of the enemy.⁴⁹

Although Custance acknowledged that battle was only "a means to an end," he clearly wished to stress "the importance of the armed forces as the dominating factor." The other aims were secondary. Could not Richmond agree with that? No, Richmond could not. He replied: "If I say that trade is stopped to bring pressure upon the whole people . . ., and you agree that [ms. reads "what"] this is among the aims of trade attack, what I feel is that we can hardly call this a 'Secondary aim.' " And he unloaded seven more pages on Custance containing instances from the eighteenth century to the Russo-Japanese war where statesmen had quite sensibly ordered fleet commanders to regard such "secondary aims" as prime tasks. Near the end he said, "If we make our young officers think that they have not to apply their thoughts outside the service, and that all they need is to be told to destroy the enemy, I think we are bringing them up badly."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ See his marginal comments on Rear-Admiral S.S. Hall's articles in *The Times*, Dec. 1920, in NMM RIC/1/29: a book of mounted press cuttings kept by Richmond.

⁴⁸ "Sea Warfare," *Study of War*, p. 60.

⁴⁹ NMM RIC/7/4/ (C.): Custance to Richmond, 2 Dec. 1920.

⁵⁰ NMM RIC/7/4/(C.): Richmond to Custance, 7 Dec. 1920.

Richmond was not saying that the enemy's armed force could ever be ignored; that would be strategically absurd. But fixation on combat was also absurd because of the strategic realities of sea warfare: The superior navy could not count on forcing a battle without taking undue risks, and it could contrive to exercise sea power without a battle. Richmond's thinking here was in line with Corbett's, but was sharpened by his own perspectives on the 1914–18 war. Aside from the economic blockade, which could be sustained passively by the huge fleet at Scapa Flow and did not require a significant body of warships for its active enforcement, the supine Grand Fleet (to the vexation of everyone aboard) did practically nothing offensively to secure objects of sea power. Defensively, the consequence of its heavy demands upon naval resources became starkly obvious to Richmond in 1917. German submarines operating "to the westward" were destroying British shipping at a rate which looked to be fatal. By transferring destroyers from the North Sea, Richmond noted at the time, "we should lessen our chance of a decisive tactical victory at sea, but we should increase our chance of winning the war."⁵¹

The originality and analytical coherence of Richmond's conception of naval strategy arises from the manner in which it is built. He did not borrow a framework from some other thinker. He worked logically from instrument, function, and purpose to object, and drew upon history to develop a time-tested catalog of objects—"ultimate objects" or "ultimate aims" as he sometimes called them.⁵² The primacy of objects distinguishes his thought from that of Mahan, whose treatment emphasized the contest for sea supremacy rather than its exercise. And although Richmond's ideas were in this respect similar to Corbett's—who became quite finicky about the distinction between "objective" and "object"—Corbett's analysis was not geared to pressure; his notion of an object tended to be territorial. One result was that Corbett did not give sufficient consideration to the maritime objects which a dominant naval power should pursue in order to improve its sea control for particular purposes or to put economic pressure on an enemy.⁵³

My discussion has focused on Richmond's conceptual framework and does not do justice to his perceptive treatment of interactions of capabilities, risks, and objects, especially in his "Sea Warfare" lectures. Also left aside has been the question of the primacy of one object over another. Such a question involved

⁵¹ NMM RIC/14/1, memorandum: no date, but according to internal evidence probably the spring of 1917. Richmond also mentioned at the time, and often afterwards, how many destroyers could have been usefully released for anti-submarine work if the German fleet had been destroyed at Jutland; the benefits of battle success were undeniable, but the victory had not occurred and new strategic priorities had come to the fore.

⁵² "Sea Warfare," *Study of War*, pp. 53–54, 60.

⁵³ I have discussed this defect of Corbett's *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (1911), which was conceptually inspired by Clausewitz's *On War*, in a review article devoted to Eric Grove's annotated edition of the book, *Naval War College Review*, XLIV (Spring 1991), p. 131.

not only professional knowledge, but also war aims and the war effort as a whole. It was rarely to be answered by an army or navy high command; it was the duty of statesmen to answer it—not admirals and generals, who were merely to advise. Richmond was adamant on this point.

The point clearly applied to the greatest question one could ask about British grand strategy: whether the Central Powers should have been worn down by containment and relentless investment rather than the method of assault on the Western Front that was actually pursued. Richmond believed that modern conditions had created the possibility of exerting very damaging pressure through a general economic blockade.⁵⁴ There was no question in his mind that the statesmen who had yielded up Britain's traditional claims of "belligerent rights" prior to 1914 had committed a grave and costly blunder. The blockade should have been tightened earlier in the war, and the "final collapse of the Central Powers was due to a combination of military action and the blockade."⁵⁵ But did he believe, as Liddell Hart came to believe, that Britain's grand strategy should have been fundamentally different?

During the war he grumbled about the developing orientation of British strategy. Early in 1915 he wrote: "We are conducting the war on purely Continental lines, trying to beat them at their own game, at which we can develop only half our peculiar strength, and the enemy can develop the whole of theirs."⁵⁶ On 10 July 1916: "The frontal attack upon the positions the Germans have been consolidating for 20 months does not appeal to me. . . . But we are now ruled by the Continental School and must do what we can."⁵⁷ For a few years in the war's immediate aftermath, he was inclined to accent the victory on land,⁵⁸ but by early 1926 he had the importance of economic pressure firmly in mind again, as we saw just above. The issue was brought provocatively into focus in 1931 by Liddell Hart's famous paper surveying the First World War in the context of "historic British strategy," which became known as *The British Way in Warfare*. Richmond was corresponding with Liddell Hart at the time and

⁵⁴ The best source for Richmond's view of the whole subject is a little book entitled *British Strategy, Military and Economic: A Historical Review and Its Contemporary Lessons* (Cambridge, 1941, repr. 1944). He believed that a general economic blockade of this sort had never been an object of British strategy in the past. Technically that is correct, but my own recent work has developed the interpretation that Britain's eighteenth-century wars were wars of financial attrition; see Daniel A. Baugh, "Great Britain's 'Blue-Water' Policy, 1689–1815," *The International History Review*, X (1988), pp. 33–58.

⁵⁵ There is a strong statement of this view in *Sea Power in the Modern World*, p. 106. The quotation is from *British Strategy, Military and Economic*, p. 152.

⁵⁶ "Remarks on Present Strategy," 14 Feb. 1915. See also the diary, 11 Oct. 1915: Marder, *Portrait*, pp. 142–3, 196.

⁵⁷ NMM RIC/7/1: Richmond to Admiral Sir William H. Henderson (Ret.).

⁵⁸ See the 1918 lecture, "The Functions of the Royal Navy." Although *Naval Policy and National Strength* was published in 1928, the strategy essays in it, which emphasize assault more than investment, were written in the early twenties.

loaned him some research notebooks to help him write it. His only criticism of the finished essay was that he would have liked it “to be longer.”⁵⁹

It has been implied that Richmond disagreed with Liddell Hart’s position, but the evidence does not warrant such a conclusion.⁶⁰ While it is true that he never said Liddell Hart’s interpretation was right, neither did he say it was wrong. The issue turned on a wide range of policy considerations, especially relations with allies—complex matters for statesmen to decide, which Richmond may have felt he lacked the historical knowledge to judge. He did remark in 1941, however, that allied nations “were no more ready to make some sacrifice of their individual ambitions and interests in the twentieth century than they had been in the seventeenth and eighteenth.” A doctrine should therefore be formulated, he suggested, which would serve to remind British and allied statesmen that, if they expected “all the benefits which sea power confers to be forthcoming,” Britain could not afford to answer allied requests for soldiers “on a continental scale.”⁶¹ The inclination of these comments is clear.

III

No examination of Richmond’s strategic thought can overlook his perspective on technology. In the period from 1890 to 1930, the heart of his active career, the navies of the world underwent a staggering transformation of weaponry and capabilities. During the decade prior to 1914, the British navy was led into this technological future with gusto and confidence by Admiral Sir John Fisher. Especially toward the end of his career, Fisher issued bold manifestos heralding the revolutionary primacy of some new weapon or platform with dismaying frequency.⁶² Undeniably the Royal Navy at that time needed someone like “Jacky” Fisher and needed officers who would be alert and receptive to technological advance. But officers who gravitated toward mastery of ships and weapons—and the system of naval education encouraged this—naturally became habituated to seeking technological answers to questions about tactics and strategy.

The notion that this had produced a dangerous form of ignorance was well established in Richmond’s mind before 1914. As a younger officer of recognized abilities, he attracted Fisher’s attention, but within a few years Richmond sensed a strong incompatibility of outlook. One reason, no doubt, was the simplistic recklessness of Fisher’s occasional pronouncements on strategy. The main cause,

⁵⁹ King’s College London, Liddell Hart Papers, 1/598: 16 Aug. 1932; we know about the notebooks because Richmond asked for them back (e.g., Richmond’s letters of 27 Oct. and 24 Nov. 1930). *The Naval Review*, XX (1932), pp. 794–95. Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 214.

⁶⁰ Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 214.

⁶¹ *British Strategy, Military and Economic*, p. 153.

⁶² Fisher classified his opponents as the “Bow and Arrow” party. See Ruddock F. Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone* (Oxford, 1973), p. 427.

however, was Fisher's ardent "materialism," a word Richmond used to describe a mentality which fixed upon the material and mechanical to the utter neglect of the military and strategic.⁶³ The more Fisher's "materialism" came to dominate the navy the more Richmond strove to turn officers' minds to a larger view of war.⁶⁴ His strategic thought remained self-consciously and durably opposed to the sway of "materialism."

In the peacetime period after 1918, decisions respecting material had to reckon with rapidly advancing air and subsurface capabilities, yet do so in a strategic context of vast global responsibilities. The focus of professional attention, however, was on the "battleship question." Senior officers clung to the primacy of the battleship and kept casting about for means of protecting it from torpedoes, mines, and bombs. The vulnerability of the battleship led other naval officers and many civilian experts to declare it obsolete. Both sides built their arguments mainly on assumptions about material.

Richmond's analysis combined strategic and technical factors. He was prepared to admit that Britain must maintain a fleet of modern battleships *if* rival powers built such fleets. But which were the rival powers? Although the United States had certainly become a naval rival, British strategy had to assume that war between them would not occur. Relations with Japan were complicated, but Britain would surely try to avoid war in the Far East unless she could count on capable naval allies. That left the European powers, none of which would be able to build a rival fleet of modern capital ships soon.⁶⁵ If the situation changed, the British navy would have to respond. "But what we are told to-day," he wrote in 1934, "is that, although there should be no such ships to meet in 'battle formations,' no 'mass' to oppose, we must still possess these great ships. One asks, what for?"⁶⁶ He specified "mass" because he believed that big battleships individually or in small groups could be defeated by combinations of well-gunned, more versatile ships of inferior size; he did not accept the widely held principle that it took a big ship to deal with a big ship.⁶⁷

⁶³ "Materialism" is indexed in *Economy and Naval Security*.

⁶⁴ E.g., Marder, *Portrait*, pp. 61–62, 10 Dec. 1909. The "legacy of Fisher," he complained, has resulted in "no thinking department, no plans for war, no knowledge of an enemy's plans or movements." For "mechanical" versus "military" see his letter to *The Times*, 25 Nov. 1921, quoted in Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 126. See also, Churchill College, Drax Papers, 1/61: Richmond to (Plunkett) Drax, 24 March 1918, which remarks that the Admiralty cared only about engineering and did not see the importance of moral and military training. The evidence could easily be multiplied.

⁶⁵ I have not found many places where Richmond laid out his geopolitical assumptions explicitly; rather they are implicit in manifold writings during the inter-war period. His assumptions were certainly not unusual; in fact, they reflected the statesmen's consensus.

⁶⁶ E.g. H.W. Richmond, "The Case against Big Battleships," *Nineteenth Century and After* (Aug. 1934), p. 192.

⁶⁷ See Pollen Papers: memorandum enclosed in Richmond to Pollen, 18 Dec. 1929. This paragraph summarizes the position he reached analytically, but in his pronouncements he steered cautiously. It was one of the rare issues on which he did so; the evidence is ubiquitous. He probably compromised

The inherent disadvantages of big battleships were obvious: They required large harbors and dry docks, lacked versatility, and were so expensive that admirals had feared, and would fear, to risk them.⁶⁸ Richmond compared the battleship of the eighteenth century to its modern counterpart:

She was then offensively superior and could not be approached by anything afloat except her own kind. She had no enemies to interfere with her at sea and the menace of the fire-ship was dead. She had perfect freedom of movement, limited only by the weather; a radius of action in time limited only by her three months' supply of fresh water and provisions. . . .

And now, in 1920:

She has lost her mobility, her freedom of movement, her radius of action, her great offensive powers, she is no longer supreme on the water, her main object if she goes to sea is to protect herself, she cannot move without defensive auxiliaries of all sorts . . . and . . . her cost is prohibitive.⁶⁹

The Admiralty would not give up. To Richmond's continuing exasperation, the naval authorities focused their attention on the problem of *protecting* the battleship from air or submarine attack. This tactical and materialistic focus ignored both the large question of how to produce "a Navy which can fulfil the functions which a Navy exists to fulfil" and the particular one of how and where battleships might be used in combat. They were, of course, strategic questions.⁷⁰

It may be readily deduced that Richmond's thinking on the issue of ship size was inclined toward the principle: the bigger the worse. Of course, as he remarked to Arthur Pollen, "Any Ass can see the advantage of having stronger ships . . . provided of course one has enough of them to do the job."⁷¹ Numbers lay at the crux of the matter. Size, strength, and speed were undoubtedly valuable, but not indispensable, and the British navy would need numbers: "Of what use to us will it be to have 15 'invulnerable' battleships—if invulnerability were even a practical possibility—when our detached forces are insufficient to preserve the flow of our trade?"⁷²

because too many of his closest colleagues—one thinks especially of Beatty—wished to retain the battleship. For background, see Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, pp. 119–24.

⁶⁸ Letter to *The Times*, 23 Nov. 1921, signed "Admiral," i.e., H.W. Richmond; Pollen Papers: Richmond to Arthur Pollen, 10 Nov. 1932.

⁶⁹ "The Future of the Battleship," *The Naval Review*, VIII (1920), pp. 368–69; unsigned but written by Richmond. This two-page article is a brilliant piece of compression; its concluding prediction, not quoted here, proved correct.

⁷⁰ H.W. Richmond, "Some Naval Problems," *Nineteenth Century and After* (Feb. 1938), p. 196. On Richmond's insistence that it was futile to try to figure out how to protect a warship without considering how it was to be used see Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 220.

⁷¹ Pollen Papers: Richmond to Pollen, 19 Sept. 1932.

⁷² King's College London, Liddell Hart Papers 1/598: Richmond to Liddell Hart, 18 Oct. 1934.

This was the pivotal question which shaped his approach to naval arms limitation. The ongoing negotiations centered first on heavy ships and then on tonnage ratios generally. By 1930, the British government, in order to economize and avoid antagonizing the United States, acquiesced in limitations on cruiser and destroyer tonnage. Richmond was not alone in deploring this betrayal of a position which earlier Boards of Admiralty, mindful of the British Empire's far-flung shipping, had refused to yield.⁷³ His mission was to get the 1930 agreement rescinded, and his mode of approach was to persuade Britain's leaders, as well as those of the other maritime powers, to recast the fundamental basis of naval arms limitation—to get rid of the doctrine of parity, with its ratios, and substitute a concept based on each nation's real national-security needs, that is, “on the lines of strategy and policy.”⁷⁴

One motive behind arms limitation, particularly in Britain's case, was to save money. Richmond believed that the most practical measure was to limit the size of capital ships. Halting the mad rush toward bigness would benefit every power, but especially Britain, whose government was fiercely intent on budget-cutting and whose navy needed great numbers of ships of all types in order to carry out its manifold responsibilities. In pursuit of this goal, he approached the issue “scientifically” in terms of functions and support requirements, and came up with a calculation that a capital ship needed to be no larger than 10,000 tons.⁷⁵ Whatever the merits of this new basis for limiting new construction, one can hardly avoid the conclusion that his campaign was unwise. He could make no claim to expertise in matters of ship technology, and when he carried his argument to the public the Admiralty saw an opportunity and forced his resignation from the service. It is sad that he poured so much passion into a technical sort of analysis which was not his *forte* and whose purposes could be twisted by pacifistic politicians and rival service chiefs into arguments for trimming the navy's budget estimates. It was also sad that he kept up his criticism of the Admiralty even after it began to move toward his position on the issue.⁷⁶

This does not mean that his preference for versatility and numbers over size was wrong, or that the Admiralty had learned to get its priorities right. His continuing insistence that the British Navy must give a greater attention to cruiser and destroyer forces because convoy escorts would be badly needed, and

⁷³ Beatty, for instance, condemned his successors for accepting stricter limits on cruising ships: Beatty to Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, 6 Dec. 1930, Paul G. Halpern, ed., *The Keyes Papers*, vol. 2, Navy Records Society (London, 1980), p. 285.

⁷⁴ *Economy and Naval Security*, Preface. This book was written for the purpose. Many of its ingredients are scattered throughout his published writings and private letters between about 1924 and 1934. For a summation see “Some Elements of Disarmament,” *Fortnightly Review* (Feb. 1932), pp. 156–57.

⁷⁵ See *Economy*, especially chapter 2, “The Size of Ships.”

⁷⁶ Halpern, *Keyes Papers*, pp. 351–53: Keyes to Richmond, 4 June 1936.

soon, in the next war, certainly registers well in retrospect.⁷⁷ All in all, his strategically grounded evaluations of *existing* equipment and techniques are impressive. It must be acknowledged, however, that Richmond's vision of future developments, especially the impact of advances in design, was defective.

The weakness showed up most in the sphere of aviation. At a general level, he could see that aviation meant a revolutionary change in sea warfare:

What has happened as the result of the discovery of flight is not that air power has displaced sea power, but that an important new instrument of sea power has come into being which will modify the conduct of the operations at sea as the steamship in her time, and the surface and submarine torpedo-boats in theirs, modified it.⁷⁸

But he did not devote his mind to working out all the ways the modifications would occur. His approach to the question was piecemeal; his heart was evidently not in it. Moreover, his anti-materialist, historical perspective inclined him to advise caution in the face of the many claims about transforming technologies, which, one must grant, were too strongly made and too readily believed during the 1930s. Hence, he was fond of emphasizing the stabilizing role of offsetting weapons and methods. As a result, even though Richmond had urged during the First World War that means should be developed for enabling carrier-borne aircraft to torpedo enemy fleets in their harbors, carrier aviation never found a proper place in his thoughts on naval strategy.⁷⁹

This criticism should not be confused with Richmond's alleged prejudice against the "airmen." He had nothing against naval aviation. In fact, he deplored the Admiralty's attitude toward the Naval Air Service in 1917 and did not wonder that the "air men" wanted "a separate service, clear of the Admiralty!"⁸⁰ It is true that he was always ready to remind people of the ongoing and indispensable capabilities of surface warships, and also inclined to doubt whether big, vulnerable carriers were worth their great expense. But his hostility was directed toward the Royal Air Force, or rather it was rooted in his utter rejection of the primary strategic doctrine enunciated by that service. This doctrine held that pressure, by bombing, could be effectively applied on the enemy's resources without consideration of his opposing aerial force, that this was the only strategic purpose to which Great Britain's air strength should be devoted, and that by it alone British national security in peace and war could be upheld. These claims

⁷⁷ *Sea Power in the Modern World*, p. 232. "Some Naval Problems," *Nineteenth Century and After* (Feb. 1938), pp. 197–99.

⁷⁸ *Sea Power in the Modern World*, pp. 138.

⁷⁹ Marder, *Portrait*, pp. 244–45, 268–73. Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 75. "Sea Warfare," *Study of War*, pp. 97–99, 105, 112. *Economy*, pp. 196–200. *Sea Power in the Modern World*, pp. 125–27, 131–51. His analysis was incomplete partly because he focused on defense against invasion, attacks on shipping, and relative costs, but that is no excuse for someone with his breadth and intelligence.

⁸⁰ Marder, *Portrait*, p. 245, 16 April 1917.

were not only insidious, but false on all three counts. The first claim violated the basic principle that one must not ignore an enemy's countering armed forces. The second tended to deny the manifold uses of aircraft in war, some of which were crucial to the exercise of sea power. The third flouted in a most extreme manner the concept that strategy should rest on "the principle of the cooperation of arms."⁸¹ Richmond, thus, had ample intellectual motivation for detesting the totalitarian version of "air power" which was being trumpeted by the leaders of the Royal Air Force.

In a passage of lapidary elegance, Professor Schurman has remarked on Richmond's and Corbett's struggle to rid the Royal Navy of its "obsession with material and the idea of the big battle," a struggle which earned them nothing but resentment from the admirals in charge.⁸² On this major issue as well as many others, the two men were indeed in full accord. But their contributions to strategic thought differed, and not just because Richmond's span of life carried him further into the modern era. Where Corbett inclined toward large geopolitical considerations and found inspiration in general principles and axioms, Richmond analyzed functions. His theory of naval warfare was thus more disciplined than Corbett's and more intimately bonded to historical data. Considering all aspects, Richmond's command of naval history has never been equalled by anyone else, and there is no obscurantism in his vigorous, plain-style writing. It is more the pity that he never wrote a formal treatise on naval strategy.

As is vividly illustrated by his approach to arms limitation, he took a purist's view—pressing his case in terms of strategic fact and logic. He was not naively ignorant of the roles of politics, emotion, and prestige; indeed, no one knew better than he how group attachments to particular weapons and weapons platforms aroused passions and engaged interests. He staked his reputation on countering passion and interest by keeping the argument pure, and he was forthright and outspoken in argument. In the world of affairs, it is not an endearing posture. There was the further difficulty that his campaign against "materialism" was bound to be resented. But what probably separated him from his peers more than anything else was the scholarly study of history. Many fellow officers appreciated Richmond's historical knowledge and understood that he did not disrespect knowledge of technology. To the majority of his profession, however, he was either dangerous or irrelevant, like a creature from another planet. It is useless to blame him or his colleagues for the resulting alienation;

⁸¹ See Pollen Papers: Richmond to Pollen, 4 Aug. 1927, and especially *Sea Power in the Modern World*, pp. 135–38, 150, 308. See also Professor Hunt's defense of Richmond's record on this issue in *Sailor-Scholar*, pp. 160–61.

⁸² Donald M. Schurman, *The Education of a Navy: The Development of British Naval Strategic Thought, 1867–1914* (Chicago, 1965), p. 188.

under the circumstances, one might as logically congratulate both the man and the institution for his attaining the rank of admiral.

From a career perspective, his life-long effort to counter “materialism” may be regarded as folly. He was, in fact, contending not only against the training and outlook of nearly all his colleagues, but against the most noteworthy trend of the twentieth century, technological progress—a circumstance which evidently has diminished his posthumous reputation as a strategic thinker. Yet, the quality of his knowledge and his staunchness in adhering to his point of view may be regarded as rare and provocative gifts to posterity. Here was someone who insisted in almost everything he wrote that the modern method of deriving strategy should be reversed. One should not work from capabilities of weapons (which he included in the word “technique”) to tactics, to strategy, and so on, but rather one should work in the opposite manner:

Powerful, therefore, though the arguments of technique may be, the arguments of policy are more powerful. In the long run errors of policy have far more far-reaching effects than errors of strategy, errors of strategy than errors of tactics, and errors of tactics than errors of technique.⁸³

The unique interest of his strategic thought resides in its logical pursuit of this approach.

Thus, all in all, Richmond is a remarkable figure, not only as a historian but also as an analyst of strategy. His concept of a navy as mainly an instrument which assists and resists military assaults across water, while operating simultaneously to relieve and to apply pressure on national resources, is a concept which defines the objects of sea power. It is as relevant today as when he wrote. And, although he devoted his life to the naval service and naval studies, his steady insistence on dealing with war-making as a whole and on the efficient cooperation of all arms testifies to the breadth and integrity of his outlook.

Discussion

Nicholas Tracy: I wonder whether I could add something or perhaps present some questions about Richmond’s attitude towards the efficacy of the economic restraint that can be imposed by sea power. It’s quite evident that he, like everyone else in 1918, was impressed. This image of the efficacy, the ultimate efficacy of the naval weapon through trade control, really was sustained throughout the 1920s, but there are a couple of papers that are important in this. In drafting *Imperial Defence and Capture at Sea in War*, he produced an argument that Britain had, he said, quite rightly never used trade control in national wars in the past. I believe, from the context of his text, this is because the power

⁸³ “Some Naval Problems,” *Nineteenth Century and After* (Feb. 1938), pp. 202-3.

resources were inadequate to achieve adequate control to besiege an entire state. This paper, in draft, was sent to Hankey. That was the end of Richmond's relationship with Hankey. It does seem to be about the end of the letters between the two of them in which Richmond was providing Hankey with ammunition for his support of naval power—Hankey, of course, being an absolute advocate of the maintenance of belligerent rights. Later, I believe it's in *Statesmen and Sea Power*, he wrote that neither had Sea Power trade control, by itself, subjugated a great power's economic resources. He was thinking, not in terms of an army being required to contain the land frontiers of the state, but imposing an exhausting pressure of active campaigning upon the enemy so that the naval power was multiplied out of all proportion. So it is evident that he was addressing the question of American concern about the power of the Royal Navy. He just wanted to make it quite clear that the United States wasn't in danger.

I think Richmond was actually in the forefront of those who discovered that the impression left by the 1914–18 war that economic pressure had brought about the German collapse had been at least grossly overrated, if not deliberately falsified by Weimar. The pressure certainly acted locally within the Austro-Hungarian and German empires, partly because of administrative efficiency within those systems, so that food supplies weren't adequately managed. It emphasized aggravated nationalist feeling within the Austro-Hungarian empire. It gave the Hungarians an opportunity to use their food supply for exacting political concessions from the empire in general. But in general, I think that he was one of the first to realize that the sound echoed between Washington and London for a decade over this question of who controls this mighty naval instrument was not well placed. I think that his focus on defence trade was, if not fully understood by himself, in fact a correct understanding that the defence is a stronger form of warfare, that navies can do a useful job by defending their nations' trades, a much more useful job than by trying to control international events by attacking the trade of others.

Daniel Baugh: Well that puts a lot on the plate and opens a very large question. As to the efficacy of economic pressure on the Central Powers during the First World War, I've read a great deal about it and so have you. What economic pressure does is create those breakdowns of transportation, supply and administration. Germany and Austria handled it quite badly. That's part of war. You've got to be able to do that and if you don't put economic pressure on a country, they don't get the opportunity to foul up. And indeed, that is something that runs as a leitmotiv through Richmond's thought—during the war especially. You should harass the enemy. You never know what damned foolish things they'll do if you harass them. This is not a sideshow matter. If you can harass them, and it isn't going to cost you very much, do it. In this case this was a very coercive, concentrated harassment.

Now to turn to the next point, because I don't want to leave that unsettled, I think it's a very great question. I agree that Admiral Beatty did not really appreciate the efficacy of the economic blockade, certainly from late 1917 onwards. There is an interesting thing that I picked up in Brian Ranft's volume of *The Beatty Papers* for the Navy Records Society [Navy Records Society volume 128, (London, 1989), volume 1 1902–1918, p. 572–74.] In 1918, there's a letter he writes to his mistress describing the scene when the German officers come aboard in the fog at Scapa to surrender the German fleet, and Chalmers' *Life and Letters of Beatty* [pp. 344–45] reprints the letter and gets it wrong because at its crucial point, the German, Rear-Admiral Hugo Meurer, replies, when Beatty asks why he is so depressed: "It's more than just having lost," the German admiral says, "I do not think the Commander-in-Chief is aware of the condition of Germany" If you look in Chalmers' *Life and Letters of Beatty*, you'll find that this isn't said that way in that crucial sentence ["I must think the Commander-in-Chief is aware of the condition in Germany"] and I'm pretty sure Ranft's version has it right. It's a tidbit, but it does express the fact that Chalmers, who published this thing after the Second World War, and was very close to Beatty, may have been reflecting the view that he just didn't really notice how efficacious the blockade was.

Now the crucial point. The crucial point is whether Richmond believed that economic pressure was important and effective. I agree that he gave priority to the defence of trade of the realm, but what he was saying, and it runs through many of his other writings before and after the 1930s, is that the country historically had never seriously embarked on a policy of economic blockade of a major continental country. In the Dutch Wars they did, but not [against] France. That's historically correct. He was right to say that. What he then said was: however in cooperation with allied armies, neutrals allowing it, and now in more modern ways, the dominion partners, this could and had been done. And he said during the war in his diary, "We are squeezing Germany harder than any other continental country has ever been squeezed." So he never thought that it could be decisive. He knew it was slow, but he thought it was part of winning and he never gave that up.

Rear-Admiral Richard Hill: My research on this subject has been confined to two years worth of *Naval Reviews* in 1929 and 1930. Richmond wrote an enormous amount in the *Naval Review* at that time, probably because, as I would say, he was "on the cusp." He had finished at the Imperial Defence College. He probably realized that he was not going to be employed. He was a disappointed man. He felt there was nothing to lose.

On the particular subject that Nicholas Tracy raised, he wrote a great deal about the proposals on freedom of the seas, some of which was published in the open press and some of which was not. But I have here something from the

1929 *Naval Review* on Mr. Bullard's proposals with some comments thereon, in which he says, "In 1915 Germany was in the greatest want. Writings of her military commanders show how precarious was her situation. Supplies other than contraband poured into her through neutrals. It was this abnormal trend, conducted by the neutral powers claimed by them as a right, which brought about those disastrous losses [in lives]." He then refers to the rest of the losses in the remainder of the war. It was his contention in this paper that the war could have been terminated by economic pressure as early as 1915 had neutral rights not been claimed. It was this that was one of the grand bases of his opposition to the freedom of the seas concepts in neutral rights in war. I don't quite know how that squares with Nicholas's analysis of his skepticism about the efficacy of economic pressure.

There is one further question I'd like to ask and it concerns terminology. Dan has made a very cogent distinction between object and objectives. There are two other words which Richmond used both of which are roughly the same but slightly different. First, in his obituary of Corbett in the 1923 *Naval Review*, Richmond wrote, "The function of Corbett's analysis of the function of the fleet," the word function here, "the object for which it was always implied," and we get the word object, "has been threefold. Firstly to support order and obstruct diplomatic effort, secondly to protect or destroy commerce, and thirdly, to further or hinder military operations ashore." I think that was a very accurate statement of Corbett's analysis. I'm not quite sure that Richmond carried on that analysis, particularly as far as diplomatic effort was concerned. He didn't, it seemed to me, discuss very much of what we now call low intensity operations or diplomatic effort. That was, it seems to me, missing in most of his analysis because the more we look at the history, even of the times he was writing about, diplomatic effort was part of the whole thing, particularly diplomatic effort with neutrals.

Then, he says one more thing in the initiation of the discussion on the size of the fighting ship which we are probably going into more deeply tomorrow afternoon. I will just make this one point now. A navy, as we have been often told, performs certain duties. Now, here is another word: duties. The navy enables the army and air force to move across the sea and the national seaborne commerce to sail; it prevents the army of the enemy or his seaborne commerce from sailing. Now it seems to me, at that point, Richmond, in the state of mind he was in, used Occam's razor to a perhaps unnecessarily sharp extent. I should be interested in Dan's comments on this point.

Daniel Baugh: The first one would call for Nicholas's comments. The second point you made about Corbett's tripartite analysis and Richmond not emphasizing the diplomatic, I find implicit in a number of things Richmond wrote, but I think you're quite right. I think that's more comprehensive and more accurate

than the formal analytical structure which I describe, which I found in those particular Richmond treatises.

I'm glad you raised that third point; it is one of the frustrations I found. My fondest hope would be that people here will say "Well I must go and read Richmond and all these essays." Yes, do, please; particularly the ones I've itemized. But, you may be frustrated by exactly what Admiral Hill has pointed out, that Richmond, far from maintaining a particular and repeated formulation of things, kept refashioning them. He refashioned in this piece or that piece, and sent it off to the *Fortnightly Review*, *The Naval Review*, or wherever. I think he had a quick pen; it was too quick. I do wish he'd written a treatise. I think he could have written a magnificent treatise, but he only wrote a pretty good brief one: the two lectures on "Sea Warfare." He does say things in other places, not that they contradict, but they are incomplete renderings. I saw many of them; you just put your hand on one that I didn't know about, but I'm not surprised by it. It is a frustrating aspect of tracing his thought. Surely those who studied Mahan's thought have run into the same problem. If one were to criticize, I would criticize Corbett for being opaque at times. Corbett had range and great originality, but by gosh he could be opaque. He could string things back on top of each other and if you're really trying to parse it out you don't get it; at least, I didn't.

Richard Harding: I hope I have a very simple question, born out of ignorance more than anything else, which comes back to that point of saying that some of the issues and the arguments were opaque. Say by 1916–17, Richmond had not got a parochial view of how the war was being fought, and saw Germany, and not the German fleet, as being at fault. It strikes me that there are two sides to an argument in this context and how it has been conducted in order to build up your own argument on how it's going to be fought and also to counter the arguments that are being put elsewhere. I wonder how non-parochial was his argument when the very simple proposition was being put on the other side: The German army had to be defeated. It was the defeat of the German army that might be the key issue on the Western Front. How strong was Richmond in making that argument and countering the other argument? I'm thinking back to the situation in 1916–17 where for the policymakers it is a simple situation: the German army had to be destroyed, and therefore these more complex arguments are rather pushed into the background. I wonder how far Richmond was a good advocate, in that respect, of naval power?

Daniel Baugh: A tremendously important question. As I said in the paper, he did not grapple with it directly; I was very disappointed with this. I can add that, in June 1918, when he wrote that dated typescript on "The Functions of the Royal Navy," he very heavily loaded it in favor of the overwhelming decision of arms

being the crucial thing in the war. That could be, and probably is, as it is in most of what Richmond wrote, a function of the date at which he wrote it: June 1918. Also, I think most people in the navy at that time did not know how desperate Germany was; Beatty certainly didn't. I don't think this is just something cooked up, not by Weimar, but by the German Army: We didn't surrender, you know, we were starved. We never lost. It's all part of the "we never lost at arms" notion which Germans, in certain circles, were fond of championing. I can't demonstrate how bad things were. You can come close and I think the case can be made.

Now, what did Richmond think about this? Did he ever counter it? The problem is that he really thought that the decision of arms on the Western Front was a crucial part of 1914–18. He knew that without it the war would have gone on a lot longer. On the other hand, Admiral Hill is quite right. There are other instances, too, and you can find them in the diary, quoting Richmond as saying during the war, as he said after the war, that we [British] should have been tougher on the neutrals, sooner. I don't think it would have been over by 1915 in his eyes, but maybe by late 1916 or the winter of 1917. Who knows? He says both things. He says, on the one hand, that the Western Front was decisive. Surely, it was in getting the war over in four and a quarter years, but, on the other aspect, he says that the contributing efficacy of the economic pressure was very important in bringing Germany down. He says both things; he never made up his mind. Fair enough; that gives me something to do in my own work.

David Zimmerman: On the question of the Western Front where I presume you're criticizing Richmond, I just want to get this clear in my mind, for not following through on the idea of having a more effective maritime blockade or economic blockade of Germany as opposed to a larger commitment on the Western Front. Is that what you're saying?

Daniel Baugh: So much is coming out of my eight years of struggling with this issue in various essays and in writing a book on it! That's not really what I'm saying. What I'm saying is that, as Richmond recognized in the old wars, that military pressure had been substantially accomplished by coalition armies, not by a British army. The other thing I would say is that, in the First World War, a question arises as to whether Britain actually won the war. My position is, when I publish it, going to be very clear. Britain lost the First World War. It lost the First World War by the definition that asks which country going into the war has diminished its power status in the world to the greatest extent when the war ends and is in the least position to recuperate that position. That was the power of Great Britain and the Empire. So what I believe I have discerned is that the task of putting so huge an army in the field to do the main bulk of the fighting for the last two years of the war drained Great Britain. That,

combined with the failure of the Admiralty to deal in a timely way with the submarines, created extreme conditions of war debt to the United States. The bloodletting, as well as the economic loss for Great Britain, put her in a bad position. Maybe it was unavoidable. What I'm saying is that Richmond did not face the question as to whether Great Britain could afford to field a very large army and a very large navy.

David Zimmerman: May I just suggest to you a couple of points now that you have clarified that. First of all, maybe Richmond was simply smart enough not to, because he realized that the British had no other choice. I'm not an expert on Richmond, but the bottom line was that the allies would have lost the war in 1916, if not earlier, if it hadn't been for the substantial British commitment of forces to the Western Front. There's no doubt that the French would have been defeated at Verdun. The army was being ground down, the resources for a counteroffensive were mainly British at the Somme in 1916. I also very strongly disagree, and I think much of the current writings on the British Army, including many good scholarly works, such as the work of Graham and Bidwell, Tim Travers, etc., would very strongly disagree with the old line that the German Army was never defeated. The German Army was defeated in battle in 1918 in the hundred days. It was destroyed. It was incapable of fighting. It was not an army that was crippled by the economic blockade. The accounts of the hard-fought battles of 1918 very clearly showed this. I'm having a great deal of difficulty in accepting your line of thought. I think you're going to find the army historians, particularly, and I don't think we have too many army historians in the room today, the army historians are going to take great exception, and they're going to say simply, "Well this shows the impotence of naval power, even when it is utilized well, to effect a continental decision."

Daniel Baugh: Oh, I have no doubt of it. I know that practically the whole of orthodox military history will line up against my book when it appears.

David Zimmerman: These are not orthodox military historians. These are people who are writing from the perspective of the new military history and new analysis on the Western Front.

Daniel Baugh: Which hasn't changed on that issue. But you know we shouldn't really carry on this discussion here, maybe we can battle it out in some bar. Refighting the First World War on land is not the only point I'll make in response. I don't think all military historians agree that the huge offensives, purportedly to achieve manpower attrition against the enemy, were all that efficacious.

Jon Sumida: The last exchange provokes me to observe that I regret David French not being here. I think he might argue that the question of land or sea, or the way that Richmond looked at that problem, wasn't presented to the British government in that form. That's the problem of this sort of abstract debate about how you use sea power or whether the British pursuit of continental strategy was incorrect.

I have two not so much questions as observations. The first on the characterization of Fisher as a matérielist. I think that this is a characterization that was developed not only by Richmond but by Custance. He argued that the navy was divided into two schools—a matériel school and historical school—and this has been accepted pretty much by historians such as Marder. I would argue that it's unfair to say that Fisher was a matérielist and, therefore, he was simpleminded or that he didn't think, or that he didn't have complicated strategic concepts. I think that he had thought about strategy and incorporated changing technology. He didn't talk about strategy in the way that military intellectuals might talk about strategy, but that didn't mean that he had unsophisticated notions about the deployment of force. Part of the problem in the *Dreadnought* controversy, for example, is that people are talking past each other. They're not engaging each other on the central historical points. I hope that Nicholas Lambert will talk to us a little bit later about this, because I think he's done some very illuminating work on the question of flotilla versus battle fleet mentality.

The second observation I have is that, when we talk about the British in the First World War and their thinking about how to prosecute a naval war, one of the things that is almost always left out is the question of what were Britain's post-war goals? The question I would ask is, was British behavior in the First World War governed in part, at least, by their expectations of what would happen or the conditions that would exist after the First World War? In Jellicoe's *Memoirs*, he has a very interesting phrase where he is trying to defend his caution at the battle of Jutland. He says that the future of the British Empire, to say nothing of the allied cause, depended upon the Grand Fleet. I find it a very interesting distinction, to my mind anyway, that he was making between what Britain would have after the war as opposed simply to destroying the Germans. In other words, if, for example, the British encountered the Germans and suffered very heavy losses, but defeated the German fleet, that might not be such a good thing for the British after the war, when they were thinking about the Americans and the Japanese. It might be better in fact, not to have a decisive battle, and have the fleet intact and have that German fleet neutralized by political means. That is to say, an allied victory was better than to suffer extremely high casualties. I think that this was certainly one line of thought that was going on in the British command.

Daniel Baugh: On the question of Fisher and his thought, strategic or otherwise, there are experts in the room far better versed than I, and it would be great to have a contribution on the question you have raised. You're one of them, but there are others. Yes, the other question wasn't presented during the First World War. They didn't conceptualize the question in that way. I think that's right. I'm not sure what Jellicoe meant by that, but your gloss on it may be the one. I will read one thing, and this is in *The Naval Review*; it's Richmond's review of Lloyd George's second volume of *War Memoirs*. It bears right on the point about who is actually deciding the nature of the war and the way it will be fought. Richmond picks out of Lloyd George's *Memoirs* a memorandum by Sir William Robertson, the CIGS, of 3 November 1916. He began by pointing out the unlimited character of the object of the war. This quotes Robertson: "We are not fighting for some comparatively minor object which we might hope to obtain after giving the enemy a sound beating, but we are to continue the war until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed." Now Richmond: "This unlimited object affected the whole question and introduced many elements that were not military." Then he goes on a little bit later, "Many of these elements were outside the purview of a military advisor." That's his comment on Robertson's memorandum. "Outside the purview of a military advisor." I thought that was rather interesting.

Paul Halpern: It is possibly not without relevance within the discussion on Richmond and the efficacy of the blockade that in this marvelous index of the "Naval Review Authors," I see that Richmond reviewed *The Triumph of Unarmed Forces 1914–1918*, and this was in 1923. I assume this is a review of Rear-Admiral M.W.W.P. Consett's book in which Admiral Consett, who was naval attaché in Sweden during the war, was very critical of Foreign Office diplomacy because of the many loopholes through which critical items flowed to the Germans. Consett's book was certainly very influential when it was published. Now, it's also of interest that a recent biography of Esmé Howard, the British Ambassador in Sweden, is very critical of Admiral Consett and tries to change the balance. But again, for Richmond's line of thought, I think this is possibly a very significant article.

James Goldrick: One thing that I think is going to come later on in Eric Grove's paper is Richmond and the progress of naval technology. I certainly feel uneasy studying Richmond as to the extent that he'd locked himself out almost deliberately from naval technological development. Could you comment on his mastery of those sorts of issues within the context of World War One? Certainly, with his very early diary material in 1914–15, he was really proposing some very odd things with the employment of both heavy and light forces in regard to the

capabilities of both submarine and torpedo craft. Do you feel he actually understood the environment he was working in during World War I?

Daniel Baugh: Again I would like to throw that to other people, particularly the person on your left elbow [Jon Sumida], and others, Andrew Lambert, perhaps. I will say this one thing, that he may have got it wrong. He seems to me to have been very intensively into technology during the war. The diary is full of examples of imaginative use of aircraft. He wants to use torpedo-carrying aircraft to take out the German High Seas Fleet at its anchorage. You have to work your way up to this, as we all know. He knew that and he said we didn't begin. And there is a point in his diary where he says, "No wonder the naval aviators want their separate service. The Admiralty pays no attention to them." This is during the First World War. So whether he's right or wrong about these technical matters, I am not the historian or analyst who can speak. He does seem to me to be very alert. I will say one thing that he points out very clearly. That is, he knew something about being a torpedo officer. He thought the use of destroyers in a defensive mode for the Grand Fleet was a huge mistake, that destroyers should be used to give the enemy problems—to worry them—not to sit there and try and counter the enemy's torpedo boats. He said that again and again. I suspect he was right again about that, but I have to admit I thought I had better stay off those aspects of his naval thought. They're in there, and I think indifference to technological development between the wars is a very serious criticism. Eric Grove and I will exchange some blows about the context of that—I'll raise that tomorrow—but as far as actually judging his technological acumen, I hope others can respond to that.

Captain Sainsbury: I can't respond to that. I did want, if we can shift target, to ask Dan if he would like to reply at all on the effect of Richmond's personality on the attainment of either his objects or his objectives. I ask because I suddenly found myself sadly boning up on Barry Hunt's work and I found in a paper he wrote ten years ago now, while he said that Richmond challenged the clichés passed among his contemporaries, his influence was limited significantly by defects in his personality. He was arrogant towards his superiors, impatient with less gifted men, and driven by a sense of integrity which made him seem rigid. My mother used to sum that up by saying he's so sharp he will have cut himself. I wonder whether either the domestic or the written definition gives you food for thought.

Daniel Baugh: I haven't seen that paper and I've got to look at Hunt's paper to see what evidence he has. This is a very difficult thing. I mean I'm old enough now to know that until you've actually met and dealt with someone, you don't really know what they're like. With Richmond, the evidence we have handed

down to us is very mixed. He seems to have been much loved in Cambridge. Trevelyan remarks at the end of his obituary about Richmond's kindness. It's an enormously large question. I do think that Richmond was intolerant of his intellectual inferiors. The *Diary*, you know, is made up of frustrated and angry jottings mostly during the war; when he is out with Admiral May, there are some of the best, before the war. I don't keep a diary, but I imagine that if I did, it would have some of this kind of thing in it, and I better stay off myself because I may be looked upon as a brash pup which should be put down, but I think there was a problem in one respect, one very important respect. Donald Schurman had a finger on this thing, this problem, in his essay of many years ago.

Richmond walked with the great as a little boy. His father, and I think his grandfather, were distinguished portrait painters. I think Gladstone was in his house. When Balfour met him, in 1916 or whenever it was, the first time, he said he knew both his father and his grandfather. I suspect that Richmond wasn't so much insubordinate with respect to his seniors, as not in awe of them. There are many people in the higher ranks of corporate life or military life or what have you, who expect a degree of awe and notice it when it isn't there. He just couldn't give that; it wasn't in his nature.

In 1963 Roskill, in *The Naval Review*, did an afterthought on Sir Herbert Richmond. For the most part, it's very forgiving, but at the same time—I think it was at the same time—Roskill was writing his books on *Hankey* and *Naval Policy Between the Wars*. That was during the '60s and '70s, so those volumes were written after he wrote his 1963 piece that sort of is rather easy on Richmond's personal shortcomings. He puts in there "the fact" that Hankey never trusted Richmond fully. This all goes back to when they were both in some battleship in the Mediterranean as young pups, recently commissioned. I think this is all invention on Roskill's part. In fact I'm armed: 30 November 1939, Hankey to Richmond, "You and I have often thought alike. Good work my old shipmate." Now, what do you make of that? I mean Hankey's changed his mind? They corresponded all the way from 1915 to the end of Richmond's life. Yet, Roskill tries to make out that Hankey never really trusted Richmond and he keeps talking about Richmond being intolerant while Hankey knew, Hankey—a smoothie politician—knew that the brass wouldn't hear Richmond's name. That, of course, would make him be a bit standoffish in certain circumstances. I've given a rather extensive answer and I have much more; I have a whole file on it.

Mark Shulman: I would add Mahan to Baugh's three factors in the shaping of Richmond's thought: history, materialism and World War I. With this predecessor, much of the language of the debate was already shaped. So he could, like Corbett, pick up Mahan's operational and purely naval history and be more

useful with it. He could add materialism and war experience by way of corrective to his illustrious predecessor.

Richard Harding: Dan Baugh makes a good case for Richmond's position regarding the navy as a defensive force, but is less convincing about his breadth of perception regarding the offensive power of a navy in putting pressure upon the enemy. Richmond disliked "the domination of French strategists" (*Amphibious Warfare in British History* (Exeter, 1941), p. 27), but seems to have shown little interest in the problem faced by the army from the spring of 1915.

Julian Corbett's Influence on the Royal Navy's Perception of Its Maritime Function

Donald M. Schurman

The *Education of a Navy* had its title picked by the publisher. Originally I had chosen for a title "The Pens behind the Fleet," but my editor thought that sounded too much like a wartime jingle about the girl in the factory who was "the girl behind the man behind the gun." I have always regretted that I did not stick to the original title because the people I wrote about may have done many things, but, Mahan perhaps excepted, they did not accomplish "The Education of a Navy," despite my conclusion that cleverly dodges the question. This paper will not make good my previous deficiencies. It merely attempts to highlight some of the problems that "naval educators" must grapple with. Some of these problems are:

(a) The personality of the teacher. In this case Sir Julian Corbett's. I will present a short summary of his personal and cultural background, then I will discuss his books, but more particularly *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, to account for what reputation he had. This exercise also helps to explain the preoccupation of some naval officers with Corbett, and his preoccupation with the naval service, in general.

(b) The education of young naval officers, either when they came, direct and young, to the navy or through some public or private system of preparation as a prelude to a naval career. It was this kind of education that the participants were talking about in 1902–1903, when they put forward the "Selborne Scheme." This will be given slight attention here.¹

(c) There was the whole question of attempting to ensure that senior, or relatively senior, naval officers understood the background of their profession, particularly as it embraced sea power as the "handmaid" of statecraft or, put another way, as dealing with the "sublime" aspects of the naval profession. It involved teaching strategy in conjunction with history. In this paper, this refers more particularly to the attempt to infuse deep meaning into the teaching at the Naval War Course,² especially under

¹ This is dealt with in Dr. B.D. Hunt's paper, chapter 5.

commandants such as May, Slade and Bethell.³ In some sense, this constitutes the core of Corbett's influence on the Royal Navy's perception of its function. It also involves:

- The nature of the War Course curriculum and history.
- The problem of differing perceptions of the task in hand by Corbett, by the College authorities and by the senior naval people who were the "students."

(d) The general problem of educating the State, along with the Navy, itself, on maritime functions,

- by writing books.
- by the exercise of influence.
- and in the light of the imperial factor.

(e) Some measure of assessment.

Naval Interloper

The fact that Julian Corbett wrote books on the history of the Royal Navy that were unmatched for quality, in his time, seems clear enough in retrospect. We can argue about the value to either the naval service or the nation of these books as guides or instruction manuals. We might argue about the "usefulness" of his so-called "principles," or even about the supposed dangers or imperfections of many of his prescriptions. We could even argue about whether his history was pre-determined, in an advocate's fashion,—indeed R.C. Anderson once stated that Corbett was nothing but a lawyer who habitually shaped his materials with his effects well in view. What is not so open to serious argument is that, by returning to the Elizabethan Age, and later to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in order to look at the connections between state policy and naval activity, he opened up a structured approach to British maritime strategy in a detailed way that had eluded serious study before him.

² See, as a general reference to the War Course, C.C. Lloyd. "The Royal Naval Colleges at Portsmouth and Greenwich." *Mariner's Mirror*, 52 (1966), pp. 145–56.

³ In mentioning the War Course, there is sometimes confusion because the Course may be perceived as following, ten years later, on the heels of the U.S. Naval War College here at Newport. The confusion arises because the original War Course at Greenwich was mainly given over to problems of naval tactics and manoeuvre, with more material on seamanship, as sort of an extended lieutenants course. In terms of time, it extended back into the eighties. In those years, it had the attention of both John Knox Laughton and Admiral Philip H. Colomb. The amount of strategic doctrine they got from Colomb may have been considerable, and Laughton was certainly a walking encyclopaedia, so the level of instruction was not low. However, I have no evidence that the Course had much prestige until Captain H.J. May took control between 1898 and the turn of the century. It is generally agreed, however, that the course that moved its place of business between Portsmouth, Deptford and Greenwich, effectively began in 1900.

It is not that he was alone in this move, but it is significant that he was unique in his approach. Immediately, one's mind veers to Mahan who progressively moved towards the documentary approach, although his first book was not based on what we, in the historian's quill-driver trade, call original research. But Mahan, in America, like Laughton and Colomb in England, was a naval officer. Corbett was not a naval officer. The gun-room, the quarter deck, the ministrations of the "Schoolie," or the mate wielding a rope-end were all influences he had not felt.

He was also unique in that he was a self-taught amateur. Thus, his reputation, as far as the Navy was concerned, depended on his skill as a communicator to a tightly-knit naval officer clan and to important figures who had to deal with the formulation of naval policy. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, his ultimate influence depended on his scholarly publication.

Of course, nobody writes in a vacuum, and Corbett was a direct beneficiary of the naval aspects of that *fin de siècle* imperial scramble that occurred, both as a part of the general capitalist movement and as a continuation of more general, and perhaps deeper, imperial tradition. Like other naval writers, Corbett moved around the newly founded Navy Records Society for encouragement and inspiration. Corbett was not light years away from Laughton and Colomb by task definition. For various reasons, however, Corbett's scholarship was on a higher sustained plane than the others were; also, although to a lesser degree than Mahan, he enjoyed some substantial publishing success. The general point to be made, no matter what standard of comparison is used, all of them, Mahan, Laughton, Colomb, and Corbett were carving out a new field of documentary history based on state archives.

How then did Corbett come to the discipline? His background has a bearing on this question. A family fortune, founded on office block construction in the city, enabled him to go to Marlborough and then, Trinity College, Cambridge. At Trinity, he coxed eights and graduated with a First Class degree in the Law *Tripes* in 1875. His family, where personal ties were strong, were Liberals in politics and reformers by temperament and tradition. However, when he came down from Cambridge, Corbett never practised law in any serious way, although he was admitted to the Bar in 1877. He took up more esoteric pursuits, such as developing his talent for sketching at the Slade Art School, and travelling in India, the United States of America, and Italy. Then, he tried his hand at fiction and other writing, such as short, popular biography. He punctuated this literary activity, in season, with fishing trips to Scotland or Norway and shooting in Sussex.

I mention this here only to highlight the non-naval nature of his life before the 1890s. He carried on his marginal literary career in a hothouse atmosphere. He lived at home, saw a lot of his brothers and sister, and, especially, of his mother. None of them, with the exception of his mother, seem to have had any

affinity with or understanding for his writing aspirations. Consequently, when his mother died, he looked around for companionship and a career, for he was acutely conscious of talents not realized. Also, when he wrote, especially on Drake (two books; a novel and a short biography), he was irked to be regarded as an amateur writing books for boys. All of these things, but most particularly anger at the literary-historical scene, impelled him into the heavy research for *Drake and the Tudor Navy*. I use the words "heavy research" advisedly, since he had previously consulted archives, as had other naval writers. He was determined that no one would ever use the word "amateur" about him again. He was not attacking the navy, naval writers, or the naval establishment. He wrote to gain self-respect and, in my view, if had he written on the army in the Crimea, he would have produced a "definitive" history. As it happened, the honing of his talents and his naval interest happened to coincide in a fortuitous manner.

So, he wrote *Drake and the Tudor Navy*. I do not wish to re-canvass this work here, except to point out that it was a seminal work, as well as an amateur's attempt to show that British naval history was based on something more than romantic constructions, such as Froude's, or on inspired ship construction procedures, which catered to the professional preoccupations of the decade. He had his share of chauvinist bias, and, of course, most people were interested in ship design changes, but he also began to show that, even in its early years, British naval success was based on something more than a foreordained surge "from out the azure main" involving a "charter" and "rule Britannia." This big-Empire factor had not escaped Colomb, of course, any more than it had Mahan. But, drawing on Elizabethan beginnings, Corbett's *Drake* book married a strain in British foreign policy that involved individualist or independent action, activity conceived of deep within the English psyche, to a growing sense amongst those who governed the Elizabethan State and her early sailors, that a sea policy with strong teeth in it could be rationally constructed. Indeed, he showed that the Elizabethans had done so. In his descriptions and reconstructions, the author's own veering between the practical and the ideal closely resembled the actual uncertainties of the times. For instance, today with all the subsequent research and illumination of such scholars as Wernham and Andrews, readers must still allow dreams and facts to jostle each other, to an extent, for possession of the interpretive ground. For Corbett to have hit this balance, at once, was an extraordinary accomplishment. If he went too far toward claiming that the pattern of sea-power development was more important than army development in the first book, Corbett was not irrevocably committed to this line. Rather, he quickly realized that he had gone too far, and, in his next book, *The Successors of Drake*, he ditched forever the idea of maritime exclusiveness and was able to bring his book into port as an advocate of combined operations or service co-operation. He never wrote again to push the idea of the navy acting totally

alone. He thought that soldiers writing in praise of army alone were equally ludicrous; and said so.

The Naval Education Scheme

The Selborne Scheme of 1902 was concerned with boys' education. Corbett's interest in it was marginal,⁴ and, furthermore, he was no expert in the subject as it applied to the early education of naval officers. He could draw on no personal expertise, nor had he made any special study of the historical aspects of the question. What information he possessed did not come from his own historical studies. There can be no doubt that Corbett's writing helped sell Sir John Fisher's proposals, especially in non-naval circles. Nevertheless, Corbett's contribution was pure journalism. He was fed material by Sir John, himself, and through Fisher's acolytes, as Herbert Richmond and William Henderson then were, to meet very artificial deadlines and, presumably, Fisher's needs. He performed well as a member of this orchestra but, along with others, he had been under the baton of the maestro.⁵ The first of his three articles appeared in March 1902, and the new scheme was promulgated at the Admiralty in December of that year.

Naval War Course

No doubt there was an obvious connection between the deliberate gratification of Sir John Fisher's wishes and the fact that Corbett was asked by the then Director of the War Course, Captain H.J. May, in August 1902, to lecture to the War Course. Another strong factor in Corbett's selection must have been Sir George Sydenham Clarke, the first Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1902, who wanted Corbett's support in his attempt to enhance thinking about combined operations in British strategic planning.⁶ May wrote to Corbett that he could keep his historical perspective in the four to eight lectures proposed, and choose his period, "within reason." However, the modern implications of such examples were not to be ignored. Corbett was invited to be innovative in showing how strategy could never be completely military or naval when state politics, statecraft, or statesmanship were involved; or, as May put it, Corbett's task was to be "the deflection of strategy by politics."⁷

⁴ D.M.Schurman, *Julian S. Corbett, 1854–1922: Historian of British Maritime Policy from Drake to Jellicoe* (London, 1981), pp. 28–37; and B.D. Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, 1871–1946* (Waterloo, 1982), pp. 7–9. For a full description of the scheme, see Arthur Marder *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow: The Royal Navy in the Fisher Era, 1904–1919*, Vol. 1 (London, 1961), pp. 28–32, 46–52.

⁵ The articles were published by *The Monthly Review* in March, April, and September 1902.

⁶ Clarke's influence is specifically acknowledged in the introduction to *England in the Mediterranean* when it was published in 1904. Also, Clarke and J.R. Thursfield's influence was strong through that remarkable publication *The Navy and the Nation* in 1897. Corbett was under considerable intellectual debt to the work and the approach to naval policy.

⁷ May to Corbett, see Schurman, *Corbett*, p.33 and also J.S. Corbett, "The Teaching of Naval and Military History," *History* (April, 1916).

The War Course was not a new creation when Corbett began to lecture there.⁸ It is clear to me that this was a turning point in Julian Corbett's working life, and one that put him in an uneasy frame of mind. His expertise rested on his books, and, at that time in 1902, he was working on *England in the Mediterranean*. His history books were expected to speak directly to the modern age, just as, through his interpreters, he is no doubt expected to do at this conference.

What was it like to lecture at the War Course? Between Christopher Lloyd's quick brush with the subject, Corbett's reflections in 1916, and Corbett's correspondence as detailed by me in my biography in the chapter entitled "New Boy at the Admiralty,"⁹ one must hazard some opinions.

Strategy and tactics had been taught, along with more severely practical subjects, since the 1880s. In no sense did what went on compare with what had been going on at Newport since 1884. Laughton did teach some strategy to various groups of senior officers, and Philip Colomb talked on tactics. As has been indicated, both of these men had credentials of a high order. But Laughton was immersing himself more and more into the minutiae of the Spanish War of the 1580s, and Colomb was not a man who had a high reputation with the executive branch of the navy. He had, in fact, been working with fleet signalling and tactics since the 1870s. But, in the nineties, Fisher referred to him unkindly as a windbag.¹⁰ There is no evidence that Fisher's academic knowledge was greater than that of the majority of his fellow naval officers. Why should Corbett fare differently when he came to the War Course? The first thing is that Corbett was unencumbered with the customary baggage clinging to naval personnel. This may have been one of his great attractions. Secondly, he was acknowledged to have written important books. Thirdly, May was consciously attempting to make the War Course into something like the American Naval War College. Certainly, he understood and urged upon the new lecturer that, whatever Corbett's attainments, success among the captains on the course depended on more than simply discoursing on the materials he had written.¹¹ Undoubtedly, Corbett had been through a difficult time as a communicator, as he once wryly indicated.¹² The problem was that the people on the receiving end came from varying degrees of literary accomplishment, and possessed wildly differing scholarly capacities. How were points to be made, at the conclusion of a lecture, to make the real significance of the presentation patently obvious to men who

⁸ The work at the course has been described by Christopher Lloyd in his article, "The Royal Naval Colleges at Portsmouth and Greenwich." See footnote 2, above.

⁹ *Corbett*, pp. 22–59.

¹⁰ Actually "a column and a half," see Arthur J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea-Power: A History of Naval Power in the Pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880–1905*. (New York, 1940), p. 47, n6.

¹¹ Lloyd, "Naval Colleges."

¹² *Ibid.*

were used to acting as agents for the Admiralty? The idea that there were factors hidden from them disturbed these accomplished professionals. They were not fools, and what was not essential baggage for them, they usually ignored or discarded.

Furthermore, the distinction between traditions of history, of which they were both conscious and knowledgeable, and their less than acute appreciation of history as a critical tool, was seldom apparent to them, certainly as a group. Not only was it less than obvious, but they tended to resent all criticism, especially when it came from civilians. When Corbett, by the skilful presentation of evidence, demonstrated that the real significance of a historical event might be more appreciated by someone other than a naval officer, they felt threatened or patronized. The fact was that they were suspicious of academics.

Corbett, for his part, must have been surprised at the resentment to him personally, and to his presentations.¹³ Speaking to a service he revered and admired, Corbett found that when he took great pains to show the wonderful subtle relationships that had produced recognized spectacular results again and again, he was arousing hostility. Probably, he did not go so far as to think that his audiences were convinced they already knew what he was attempting to explain, but he should have. This was especially true when he tried to explain that naval arrangements could be made where special or beneficial effects were not always dependent on following the invitation of “a willing foe and sea room.” Only slowly would it have dawned on Corbett, as it does on most lecturers to naval audiences, that these professionals deeply resent the idea that a group of professionals, back in the eighteenth century, might have been more professionally perceptive than they, themselves, were. As good materialists, they believed in progress.

It must also be noted about Corbett that he had not been a university lecturer. He was not accustomed to fielding questions from young agile minds. Nor was he aware of the taboos that governed the senior officers. They were generally polite. He took this friendly reception for a conversion situation. They did not ask questions because senior officers, by and large, have gone past the stage in life where they wish to expose their thought processes needlessly. When not protected by Admiralty orders or rank, they generally kept quiet, but they were not always asleep.

When it was written up years later, after his death, Corbett was made to pay for his eager desire to astonish the Navy.¹⁴ The opinion of his critics was that he was too full of his new ideas. It was at the very point where he tried to show the novelty of his conclusions when Corbett was most distrusted by his audiences. Certainly, they resented his sophistication. After all, what could be

¹³ Although he was aware of it, the animus did not emerge for the public until 1931. See, “Some Notes on the Early Days of the Royal Naval War College,” *The Naval Review* (May 1931), pp. 242–33.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

adduced, in a literary way by a civilian, concerning the navy that they did not already know? Indeed, who would dare to tell a four ringer how to think—about anything?

In considering the War Course, I have attempted to dwell on method, somewhat ignoring content or matter. My concentration has been on the mutual incomprehension that existed, in large measure, between sailors and the literary civilian. It is now necessary to bring in the question of what was taught, and with what effect.

Corbett must have been considered an asset to the service, since he lectured regularly to the War Course in its various guises and locations from 1902 until the First War. Surely, this was due to more than Fisher's pressure and support. Particularly in the first years, he was appalled by evidence that materialist notions of strategy were overwhelmingly dominant. This mind-set was partly responsible for the incomprehension that modern naval officers, raised on steel and screws, showed towards the eighteenth century with its sails and masts. It was the materialist approach that drove naval pundits, in or out of the services, to think of the next war in terms of big, smash, battle. Tsushima seemed to many to bear out this big battle preoccupation in overwhelming fashion. In Corbett's lectures, he attempted to support combined operations thinking in both evidence and conclusions. But he had more to worry about than the popular strategic ideas at the War Course. He had to take care not to lecture in such a way as to make life more difficult for Fisher, who was, himself, an arch-materialist, who was only partly an amphibian, and whose enemies were legion. Care was constantly needed, and Corbett acknowledged the helping hand May gave him in walking this mined path.¹⁵

In the spring of 1905, May, the intelligent, perceptive and helpful War Course Director, died. Sir Edmond Slade, who succeeded him, held wide historical views as well. Corbett's contact, both with him and with Sir Charles Ottley, the Director of Naval Intelligence, continued to be close. It was during this time that it became clear that any planning for a flank attack against a German thrust across Belgium and northern France would get no support from army planners.¹⁶ Since there is no evidence that Fisher supported such an allocation of resources, this is not surprising. This was the end of that particular initiative and it proved to be an enduring long-run decision, not to say a monumental one. It was the end of serious combined operations planning on an inter-service scale. It must have influenced attitudes at the War Course.

Perhaps surprisingly, the importance of a combined operations capability remained alive and well at the War Course. This must have been a problem from Fisher's point of view, since the problem of having or producing war plans was constantly thrust at him by enemies. Where, and at what level, was planning

¹⁵ "The Teaching of Naval and Military History," *History* (April, 1916).

¹⁶ *Corbett*, pp. 41–43.

to take place? Mainly because of the disaffection with Fisher and his methods in the service, involving challenges to his authority, it was impossible to set up planning procedures that were safe, realistic and authoritative. Attempting to inhibit the criticism, Fisher set up the so-called Ballard Committee later in 1906, which eventually produced secret plans for Admiralty consumption by early 1907.¹⁷ But Corbett, from his vantage point at the War Course, warned Fisher that the materials he had been circulating from the Admiralty to defuse opposition were, for the most part, “amateurish rubbish.” It was then that Corbett was ordered to go ahead and “teach strategy.” This meant for him that the relatively loose fitting guidelines provided by May were now settled on him from above, and this time they were a strait jacket. Furthermore, they bound both Slade and himself. Many years later, Corbett wrote to Lord Sydenham, in response to that luminary’s direct attack on him after Jutland, to the effect that he had been ordered to teach in a modernist, strategically focused way, implying that, if the products were open to unfortunate interpretations, then he was not entirely to blame.¹⁸ It might have been closer to the truth to state that the task of teaching strategy had far-reaching implications that were not to be sloughed over with a few doses of service cliché.

The background, strategic debate that was going on in Great Britain concerning the navy, in 1906–07, was mostly about the kind of capital ships that should be built at a time when the French military discussions, that eventually included Russia, were coming into play. The questions of the value of the fleet as a defence against invasion and of its use as an instrument for the securing of complete sea-mastery (*i.e.*, command of the sea) were in vogue.

The feeling at the War Course, however, was that the exercise of sea power over the globe was a vast undertaking, as the need to form an alliance with the Japanese had made clear. In his lectures, Corbett tried to show, by historical analogy, that fleet and national purposes were not always so streamlined and so obvious that the application of massive force would automatically solve attendant problems. It became clear to Corbett and Slade that the attempt to teach by historical example was not a great success. This was probably due to the fact that the naval officers encountered were more at home with authoritative prescriptions than they were with historical descriptions of actions and plans, especially those that were over a century old. Therefore, it was in an attempt to bridge the gap in understanding between lecturer and audience that Corbett began to teach “strategy,” as such, and consequently to write the “Green Pamphlet.”¹⁹ This was the document that subsequently became the core thinking behind *Some*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁹ Published as an appendix to Eric Grove’s edition of Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis, 1988).

Principles of Maritime Strategy, published in 1911. It represented the antithesis of May's system, and it was hard work. Years ago, I tried to sum this up:

Corbett's new appointment, then, as strategic lecturer to the War Course was much more important than it appeared to be at first sight, and certainly he undertook it in no light-hearted manner. His own strategic and tactical notions were grounded on a deep and growing knowledge of Britain's naval past, involving the handling and appreciation of original historical documents. The audiences he had to teach based their views on professional practice as they understood it. What historical knowledge they possessed was usually based on a cursory reading of Mahan who, in his early and most popular works, did not work from original sources. Thus, merely from the teaching point of view Corbett was faced with the almost insurmountable task of teaching strategy, and the history it was based on, at the same time. He had, as well, to entertain or be ignored. In October, he wrote wearily to Newbolt, 'my strategy lectures are very uphill work. I had no idea when I undertook it how difficult it was to present theory in a digestible [sic] form to the unused organs of naval officers.'²⁰

Admiral Custance, who understood naval history, was a respectable historian and a friend of Corbett's. He was known as an enemy of Sir John's, but his comments on the War Course method, that it might have been better if the students were required to study historical examples instead of potted meat, so to speak, were on the mark. This, no doubt, nettled Corbett.²¹ It was during this time that Corbett was writing *England in the Seven Years' War* and he used it, with its overtones of Clausewitz, to illustrate imperial problems, invasion choices, and other planning that depended, ultimately, on subtle choices and understandings.²² Such an approach may not have been the most practically efficient way to instruct at the War Course. Certainly, Corbett and Slade did not make amphibians of their audiences, nor did they convince them that subtle approaches to the convention of "command of the sea" were either admissible, possible, or desirable.

As has been mentioned, Corbett's survival as a naval lecturer did not depend only on his proficiency as a lecturer on strategy and converting War Course naval officers to a particular viewpoint. The articles he wrote supporting the Admiralty building programme after 1906 sustained him in Sir John's orbit of gratitude.²³

Then, in 1908, Corbett showed how effective he could be simply by writing history. With one powerful paper on the invasion scare of 1744, and using a

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57.

²² Published in London in 1907.

²³ J.S. Corbett, "Recent Attacks on the Admiralty," *The Nineteenth Century*, (February, 1907); and "The Strategical Value of Speed in Battle Ships," *R.U.S.I. Journal* (July, 1907) [This was a lecture delivered at the Institution in March, 1907.]

“worst case scenario,” he downed the army argument that the navy was incompetent to prevent a “bolt from the blue” attack.²⁴ This paper was used in the invasion inquiry set up by the Committee of Imperial Defence, at the instigation of the politicians. Corbett was able to turn back the main thrust of the anti-naval faction, but it was beyond his competence or capacity to totally deflect all criticism of Sir John. However, Sir John wanted unconditional victory and unconditional support. So the gratitude ring tightened. Nevertheless, an outsider who could write with such telling effect (*i.e.*, to silence the top agitators, political and military for a time) was, on the basis of his performances, too important to be ignored. When the invasion inquiry ended, he was asked to make some sense of a mass of information concerning the Russo-Japanese war. He did so, and the resulting books stored up great pedagogic potential. The 1908 paper and the Russo-Japanese War history, in themselves, are sufficient to explain why Corbett remained an influential figure at the Admiralty during the Great War and why he was eventually chosen as the navy’s official historian.²⁵

The Imperial Factor

During the War Course period, with the ups and downs of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the Naval War Staff controversy, the intense, internal war between Sir John and his enemies, and the warship-building controversies, it is easy for the historian to lose the way. In fact, behind all the talk of new ships and new challenges, there was a huge Empire whose insistent and traditional demands would not go away, and with which most of the ranking sailors had direct experience. What on earth did the army strategists, to dignify the name, and the extreme ship-building people, think was the lifeline to India, Singapore, the Cape, Brisbane and even that paragon of inactivity, Canada? The guarding of these lines of communication was the work that naval officers were trained to do. Corbett showed that if they thought, now, that one big battle would secure or dominate all these lines, and others, then they were mistaken. Scare-mongers from the eighteenth century had addressed these same problems. With the unsettling effects of modern technology, the stakes of the 1908 period seemed higher, and the game itself more forbidding and difficult. Corbett, at the War Course, could defuse direct challenges by the intelligent deployment of historical argument, but he could not, at least at the War Course, “calm all the old ladies of both sexes.”

However, this paper purports to be about education, not about imperial purposes, internal naval controversy, state policy, or quarrels between the army and the navy. But, neither Corbett nor his associates could help being caught up in the waves that swirled around Sir John Fisher.

²⁴ “Invasion, 1744,” unpublished. Copy in the writer’s possession.

²⁵ Corbett, pp. 131–51.

Retrospect

It appears to me, in retrospect, that two things stand out about Corbett. First, he was unique in that he could write and deploy history in a formal way with such telling effect that he was virtually unassailable at any level in direct controversy, given some agreement about presuppositions. He was a highly powerful, careful, and stimulating writer, propagandist and lecturer. If his audiences could not always follow him, they more or less refrained from attacking him. Second, and this is more important to this paper, he was, in another sense, a representative figure and not unique. Like other lecturers to service audiences, before and since, he faced groups whose capacities were, individually, diverse. They had not arrived at the War Course because they were all trained historians, members of the Antiquarian Society, or the British Academy. They had not had a common entry pattern, apart from rank. They were as good intellectually as native intelligence and rigorous service training could make them. They were not to be asked to produce papers that would be graded by the lecturer experts who were imported to address them. The military directing staffs were often very intelligent, but they were not experts and they were subject to the sensible service requirements of frequent postings. Where does the *point d'appui* for such a group of men lie? Like Corbett, most lecturers to military-naval institutions have had to face this situation or variations of it. That is why Corbett appears a representative figure in this context. At the War Course, the problem was highlighted when Corbett and Slade had to face the fact that there were no apparent war plans from which to teach. They had operated in the realm of history by analogy congenial to Corbett, but as they urged on Fisher the need for a war planning resource base, the general requirements for teaching became automatically more complicated.

So it is that the familiar old problem surfaces. Should history be taught in a subservient, deductive manner to principles, or should principles be allowed to emerge, from time to time, from historical examples? Personally, I have always been less than confident in attempting to extrapolate the past to illuminate the present, except when the lessons appear to emerge naturally in question time. I avoid such situations in a way that Barry Hunt never did, even when they worried him. For me, never a modernist student, it has always been difficult to convert Nelsonic lore to submariner extrapolation. The problem of mutual avoidance does not seem to go away. Professor Philip Crowl, during the Turner era here at the Naval War College, seemed to me to be facing this problem and it would be interesting to hear some talk on how problems were perceived and handled by him and by his team.²⁶

²⁶ For the background to this, see Hattendorf, Simpson, and Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars: The Centennial History of the Naval War College* (Newport, 1984), pp. 275–82; Stansfield Turner, “The Role of Higher Education in Today’s Navy,” *The American Oxonian* LX (October 1973), pp. 186–92. See also the paper by Crowl and J.K. McDonald, “New Courses at the Naval War College” presented to

On the other hand, these problems are not, in my opinion, faced so well at the other senior defence colleges, in various countries. They often do institutional or international visiting which, no doubt, is an educational way of proceeding. They often encourage “theses” or “course papers.” They provide good salaries and sometimes research dugouts for some academic “experts” and tired journalists, but, as for academic pretensions, they do not have any, in the sense generally recognized in universities. They are necessarily places where means tend to take precedence over ends. Furthermore, the amount of free writing and debate involving innovative approaches is not startling. From the problems glimpsed here, perhaps it is not surprising that “principles” have tended to supplant matter. The next step is for the needs of the moment to supplant “principles.” The question of “security” is best left unexplored, at least in this paper.

As for Corbett, perhaps his greatest work was to groom Richmond, a sailor, to undertake the practical writing and educational work necessary to permeate the naval service with critical thinking. That kept the game going in the inter-war period. He failed, of course, as Corbett had failed before him. Nevertheless, Corbett’s books, as I have pointed out elsewhere, are still serious historical interpretations, ninety years on. They still “stand as his sentinels.” So do Richmond’s.

Discussion

See discussion session at end of Chapter 6, pages 103–116.

Richmond and the Education of the Royal Navy

Barry D. Hunt

“Knowledge does not come intuitively in the science of war, nor does capacity in the art.”¹

Herbert Richmond’s reform instincts and his crusades were so many and so varied that deciding which should be emphasized in a single biographical volume was a matter of no little anguish for me. I am pleased that some aspects, which could not be fully explored in *Sailor-Scholar*, will receive attention at this gathering. I have been asked to focus on Richmond’s efforts on behalf of improving officer education in the Royal Navy. It is an agreeable assignment, for education was Richmond’s own central focus. He saw the Royal Navy’s failings in the First World War, and after, as stemming from a single source—inadequate officer education. The most enduring of his accomplishments were probably those that helped establish naval history’s credentials as a distinct scholarly field and as a vehicle for developing and spreading sound strategic thought.

Drawing up a balance sheet on Richmond’s work in this area is not easy. The objective data is patchy and the more subjective evidence is uneven. In the context of World War II and of his own final years (he died 15 December 1946), the temptation is to say that his was, overall, a success story. By almost any criterion, the Royal Navy’s operational record between 1939 and 1945 was markedly superior to its Great War performance. Richmond had, at least, some claim to have assisted in that, most notably in the area of sounder staff structures and attitudes about their use. But in light of severe resource limitations and circumstances which the Royal Navy successfully overcame, and very marked improvements with respect to the leadership and ingenuity displayed by the officer corps as a whole, Richmond was encouraged. His was not the only hand behind those improvements. Yet, in terms of the ideas he had championed, he felt personally vindicated. And on several other broad policy issues, such as the

¹ H.W. Richmond, “Sea Warfare,” in George Aston, (ed.), *The Study of War for Statesmen and Citizens* (London, 1927), p. 118.

belligerents' rights question, ship design and the roles of battleships, cruisers and the flotilla, and with respect to the limitations of strategic air power, he took pleasure in seeing his arguments generally proved correct.

Still, other realities tempered Richmond's self-satisfaction. He saw in the war—and most especially in Winston Churchill's virtual domination of its higher direction—evidence that he had also failed. His pessimism on this score emerged in a passage written in March 1942, when Britain's wartime fortunes looked bleakest:

Now everything is in the melting pot and whether after this war there will again be a Navy, or whether the country will interest itself and take steps to ensure that its people are made aware of the importance of sea power, and taught, not only by our terrible experience of tampering with the Navy in these fatal years since 1918 but also by the long experience of the past, I cannot tell. I greatly fear that what has happened before will repeat itself, and the nation even if it survives—and the Empire—will again relapse into complacency.²

Richmond was troubled then, because he sensed certain disaster, unless Churchill and his Chiefs re-focussed priorities toward gaining control of the seas. His sense of having failed to educate that leadership on maritime strategic essentials also weighed heavily. A slow recovery from a heart attack two years before no doubt reinforced his jaundiced outlook on both counts, and as he told the History Society in Oxford, "It is infinitely depressing to see some of the most obvious lessons of the past flouted by those responsible for the national security. . . ." Hence his plea:

. . . for the arising of a new school of naval historians, for the inclusion of the naval element as an integral part of our general history without which much is meaningless, much cannot be understood, and without which Demus is at the mercy of false leaders and fallacies. We need a more lively and better-founded understanding of what sea-power means. . . .³

Some of Richmond's contemporaries endorsed his bleak judgement. One, in particular, was Admiral Sir Frederick Dreyer, who had been Jellicoe's Flag Captain in *Iron Duke* and his life-long protégé. In 1952, Dreyer made clear his view that Richmond was fairly representative of senior officers of his generation. Dreyer, himself, had been anything but a popular figure within the service, especially as deputy chief of naval staff in the early 1930s and his inept and self-serving handling of the aftermath of the Invergordon mutiny. In 1952, the occasion was the publication of Arthur Marder's *Portrait of an Admiral: The Life and Papers of Sir Herbert Richmond*.⁴ Initially, Dreyer had not seen the volume when, on the basis of a *Times Literary Supplement* review, he said that he now realized ". . . what appalling stuff

² Barry D. Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, 1871–1946* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1982), p. 231.

³ H.W. Richmond, "Naval History in Public Education," *History*, XXVII (June–Sept 1942), p. 13.

⁴ (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952).

Marder had handed out. Richmond had largely a bogus reputation.” Dreyer had no time for Richmond’s efforts and rated his earlier books, particularly *Economy and Naval Security*, and his smaller capital ship theories, as “rubbish that did his reputation no good.” He did consider Richmond’s last work, *Statesmen and Sea Power*, to be “a V.G. book.”

If someone could have destroyed *most* of his *previous writings* he might have had quite a good reputation based on that book and on his teaching of *War Courses at Greenwich* and at the *Imperial Defence College*.

. . . Marder will cut no ice in the U.S.A. with his eulogies of Richmond. . . .⁵

Several days later, after having actually read Marder’s volume, Dreyer was utterly disgusted:

. . . how terrible it is to read.

I always knew he [Richmond] was *clever* and *unbalanced* as well as *conceited*—but the book goes further and makes it quite clear, that he, with all the advantages of good birth and upbringing in our Noble Service, was a *disloyal cad*.

. . . its only redeeming feature is that it is so bad, wicked and untrue that *it does no harm to our noble service* or to the reputation of Jellicoe and *the large majority of Naval officers* who were outside “R’s Ring.”⁶

For better or worse, Marder and Richmond had provoked Dreyer into producing a book of his own. Tentatively entitled, “Mess Mates with Jellicoe,” it was released in 1954 as *The Sea Heritage: A Study of Maritime Warfare*⁷ and was intended as “a complete answer to the Richmond Book.”

. . . The taxpayer who maintains the Navy is entitled to have the assurance that the Navy is not manned by *ignorant* and *useless* officers who are *timid in battles* and do not *think!* and are *disloyal cads*.⁸

That even so vitriolic a critic as Dreyer saw value in Richmond’s Greenwich and Imperial Defence College work suggests something of its ultimate importance. It was there that his reform and scholarly instincts were both given greatest play. What that meant for the Royal Navy in the long run is the subject of this paper.

Junior Officer Education

It was Richmond’s involvements in a number of pre-1914 initiatives and Admiralty committees concerned with educational questions that first brought him

⁵ Churchill College Archives Centre, Cambridge: Dreyer Papers, DR YR 4/3, Dreyer to De Chair, 15 September 1952.

⁶ *Ibid.*: Dreyer to De Chair, 19 September 1952.

⁷ (London, 1954).

⁸ DR YR 4/3, Dreyer to De Chair, 21 September 1952.

to the attention of senior officials, notably Admiral “Jackie” Fisher, who early on marked him as a member of his infamous “Fish Pond.” What Fisher called Richmond’s “missionary work” on behalf of the Selborne or “New” Scheme of 1902, and similar efforts with committees on the training of warrant officers and navigation officers, led to his appointment, first, in 1906 as Fisher’s naval assistant, then in 1908 at age 35, to his promotion to captain, and to the command the year following of HMS *Dreadnought*. Richmond’s roles in all of these early efforts were those of a junior staff officer. The experience put him in league with the leading advocates of educational reform at all levels, underscoring in terms of his own education what the existing *Britannia* cadet system could never achieve. His mind was opened as well to the ideas of Julian Corbett and others who pressed Fisher, unsuccessfully, to create a genuine naval staff structure.

This is not the place to dwell on those pre-Great War initiatives, but because the Selborne Scheme constituted such a major part of Richmond’s later thinking on education, some outline of its basic features is necessary. The 1902 “New Scheme” is the best known and was then certainly the most controversial of Fisher’s personnel reforms as Second Sea Lord. It ended the old *Britannia* training ship system and brought the education of boy entrants ashore to the new cadet colleges of Osborne and Dartmouth. Its most controversial departure was the provision for a common system of entry for all officers of the executive and engineering branches and the Royal Marines, and their common training through their first eight or nine years of service, from enrollment, at age 12–13, to their appointment, at age 22, as qualified lieutenants.⁹

It was this “common entry” or “interchangeability” feature that raised most resistance to the scheme. In pushing for it, Fisher hoped to improve overall efficiency by promoting harmony between the quarter-deck and the boiler room and raising executive officers’ awareness of the technical realities of the steam age. Controversy and charges that he was pushing the “democratization” of the service too quickly eventually forced Fisher to trim his sails. The furor also may have had the unintended effect of diverting attention from the fact that he had created a public school for the Navy, and one controlled increasingly by university trained civilian masters.

The aim of the four-year college programme was to provide a modern general education, but with a much greater emphasis on engineering and applied technology than contemporary public schools could handle, or thought wise, along with mathematics, science, and limited exposure to seamanship and pilotage.¹⁰

⁹ Two years at Osborne and two at Dartmouth, followed by eight months at sea in a training ship, led to promotion as midshipmen and fleet service. Three full years after leaving Dartmouth, they were commissioned as sub-lieutenants. With this “common” education completed, all went to normal service and further specialist training in their selected branches.

¹⁰ See, “The New Scheme of Naval Training,” Lecture delivered at the RN College, Portsmouth, 11 May 1906 by Professor J.A. Ewing, Director of Naval Education; reprinted in Peter K. Kemp, ed., *The Papers of Admiral Sir John Fisher*, (Navy Records Society, 1964), vol. II, pp. 175–92.

Like the public schools, Osborne and Dartmouth played up the character-building aspects of competitive games. Indeed, they may have over-valued the “rugged hardy” ideal, though likely no more than Sandhurst or other cadet academies, then and now. The colleges’ system of discipline, however, was probably too severe. Their graduates’ recollections are clearly mixed as to what was gained in terms of hardiness and self-sufficiency compared to the price paid. In this regard, the system’s greatest weakness—the suppression of individuality and development of cadet’s critical faculties—had something to do with the early and excessive regimentation of new entrants. Recalling this system, which changed little if at all prior to World War II, Stephen Roskill suggested that, while many survived the experience and went on to successful naval careers, others were “ruined by it.” He wrote:

The system was based on forcing cadets into a preconceived and rigid mould by the application of harsh, even inhuman discipline. Obedience to orders was the hallowed principle of the system, and woe betide any boy who was deemed to have transgressed that tenet. Any signs of originality or independence was severely frowned on—if not actively suppressed; while intellectual accomplishments always came a bad second to athletics.¹¹

Of course, the discipline and the emphasis on physical and mental stamina had their purposes. In tandem with a heavy diet of tradition, they supposedly bred instincts of duty, loyalty and self-confidence superior to that of any other navy’s. They may have also bred an inward-looking, uncritical mentality, resistant to change.

Here was where Richmond’s doubts about the entire officer education system came into play. He had disliked many features of the Selborne-Fisher reforms, but recognized they were useful first steps. Over time, however, he became increasingly worried about the type of problem Roskill had outlined; that is, what kind of impact on young, forming minds was most desirable, and constrictions on young officers’ horizons at the colleges that never allowed them to be expanded thereafter. Generally, Richmond hated the emphasis on cramming, rote learning and blind tradition, all of which he labelled as “early herding.” He sensed that most of the officer corps’ problems resulted from placing young boys in a service environment and casting them in a common form too early:

The herd instinct is the commonest in mankind. It is very difficult for many men to escape from the herd, and it becomes particularly difficult when a boy enters, at an early age, a herd from which he will never fully escape.

. . . It is not the “wearisome reiteration of type” that we require in the Navy but the freshness of outlook which results from the association of men with widely

¹¹ Stephen Roskill, *Earl Beatty: The Last Naval Hero* (London, 1980), pp. 21–2.

varied and differently acquired experience; men whose minds are free from the clogging influences of living from their early youth within a ring fence. Orthodoxy has its merits but blind orthodoxy such as is liable to result from cramped early association which accepts without question certain traditions, sayings, customs or dogmas, is one of the most dangerous of all conditions in a fighting service.¹²

These words were penned in 1932, but the argument was formed by 1918 when, as Director of Training and Staff Duties, Richmond was brought back to the Admiralty to round off the Naval Staff's restructuring, following Jellicoe's dismissal as First Sea Lord.

By that time, comparisons between the performances of Dartmouth graduates and so-called "special entry" officers were possible. The latter had been admitted since March 1913 to meet shortages caused by the new building programs and the expansion of the submarine and naval air services. Under this scheme, public school graduates had been admitted as cadets, given eighteen months naval training and sent to the fleet as midshipmen. The result was a qualified officer being produced in roughly half the time. And there was little to choose between the two products—"Darts" or "Pubs"—by the time they were lieutenants.

This being the case, Richmond argues that public school entrants held a distinct cost-advantage and were mentally better prepared and unclogged as a result of their general education being complete before they started professional training. The fullest expression of Richmond's advocacy of abandoning early-entry in favor of public school entry can be found in his 1932 book *Naval Training* and in three articles he wrote that summer for the *Fortnightly Review*.¹³ By today's standards, his ideas appear sensible, even unremarkable. At that time, they were radical, disruptive, and politically impossible.¹⁴

As director of training and staff duties in 1918–19, Richmond was successful in reconfiguring the war staff and eliminating organizational flaws which the stresses of operations had made obvious. The importance of these changes cannot be overrated, and the guidelines he established for the organization, training, and conduct of the Naval Staff became the basis of the system used through World War II.¹⁵ On education policy, however, he went nowhere. Partly this was because, with the war still on, the Admiralty had more pressing worries. Personalities also played a key part, and not only Richmond's. How much Rosslyn Wemyss, as the new First Sea Lord, knew about Richmond's role in Jellicoe's removal and his own rise to power is still not altogether clear. However,

¹² Richmond, "Naval Training: The Training of Officers," *The Fortnightly Review*, 132 (August, 1932), pp. 190–91.

¹³ *Ibid.*, (June, July and August, 1932); also, Richmond, "The Service Mind," *Nineteenth Century* (January 1933), pp. 90–97.

¹⁴ *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 212.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 90–93.

Wemyss did see Richmond as one of Beatty's men, and he was determined to keep Richmond and his radical notions on a tight leash.¹⁶

Despite all this, Richmond never tired of campaigning afterwards on behalf of improving the cadet system by widening the sources of entry and concentrating on the benefits of a general education that nurtured the individual officer's reasoning capacities throughout all the stages of his career. He understood that Osborne-Dartmouth could not be replaced entirely, but thought they could be supplemented by a greater public school entry and by expansion of the 1912 Mate Scheme that offered cadetships to suitable lower-deck ratings.

Throughout the inter-war period, very few advances in junior officer training were achieved, and these were proved piecemeal and erratic. The Selborne Scheme remained essentially intact until World War II. Osborne was closed in 1921, due to the condition of its facilities, and the remaining vestiges of interchangeability were abandoned in 1925, when a separate Engineer list was re-created. Otherwise, the curriculum and atmosphere of the four-year program at Dartmouth was left as was. Several committees did consider ways of broadening recruitment, but they achieved little. The Royal Navy continued to draw its young officers mainly from families who otherwise would have normally sent their sons to fee-paying schools. A minor breakthrough did occur in 1930 when Mr. A.V. Alexander, the Labour government's First Lord of the Admiralty, issued a paper specifically entitled "Democratization," calling for a radical broadening of selection. As a result, two expert committees were appointed. The first, chaired by Sir Ernest Bennett, examined the possibilities of financial assistance for cadets, including the creation of scholarships by local education authorities.¹⁷ The other, under Admiral Sir Frank Larken, concentrated on the Mate Scheme and ways to encourage more promotion from the lower deck.¹⁸ It resulted in little more than a change in name for the candidates, from mates to sub-lieutenants. In defence of the navy's evident unwillingness to abandon or modify its "catch 'em young" mentality, it has to be said that throughout almost the entire inter-war period, the Royal Navy had a surplus of junior officers. Following the 1930 London Naval Agreement, the Admiralty was hard-pressed to devise ways of eliminating those with supposedly marginal records. Then, only a few years later, when general rearmament once again raised the problem of serious officer shortages, the old arguments about early entry versus general education resurfaced.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

¹⁷ The members of the Bennett committee were Admirals Osmond de Brock and Reginald Drax, Sir Edmund Phipps of the Board of Education, Mr. F.R. Dale, Headmaster, City of London School. See PRO, ADM 116/2779: Report dated 29 June 1931.

¹⁸ Members, Sir Charles Walker (Deputy Secretary of the Admiralty), Engineer Rear Admiral H.L. Perry, Captain A.T.B. Curteis and Commander J. Figgins. See PRO, ADM 167/84: Report dated 24 February 1931.

By the outbreak of war in 1939, some limited progress was evident, especially in terms of wider acceptance of the idea that broad education, staff training and eventual higher promotion were directly linked. It was a cumulative process that depended on the consistent appointment of good instructors and college commandants, and recognition that younger officers' educational attainments did pay. Arthur Marder suggested that, "By the end of the 1930s, the products from the Staff Colleges had come to be respected, and senior officers were more prepared to take advice from their staffs."¹⁹ An important 1935 study completed under the direction of the deputy chief of naval staff, Vice Admiral William James, made it clear, however, that there was still a very long way to go. His committee, taking a comprehensive view of officers' training throughout their entire careers, and drawing heavily on expert witnesses—including former staff college commandants, Admirals Reginald Drax and John H. Godfrey, later to become the distinguished and controversial wartime director of naval intelligence—demonstrated that the officers least likely to be promoted were being sent to Greenwich, while the better types were being retained at sea. Post-Greenwich appointments bore little connection to course performances. As a corrective, the James Committee argued that officers did need a general education throughout their careers, that if they did not receive it early, their potentials would never develop, and if it was not continually reinforced, what had been learned would atrophy.²⁰

Richmond, who by that time was ensconced at Cambridge as Vere Harmsworth Professor, played no direct role in the James Committee's work and its findings in favor of a standardized system of "obligatory professional education." Nevertheless, Drax, Godfrey, and James emphasized the substance of the arguments Richmond had made in *Naval Training* and his various articles. Yet, even with these powerful endorsements, his arguments remained suspect. Another Admiralty committee, appointed in 1937 to look specifically at junior officer training,²¹ characterized Richmond's ideas as "revolutionary" and "unacceptable." He suggested instead that junior officer shortages be met by trimming or abolishing entirely the sub-lieutenants course at Greenwich, and similarly reducing to one year the specialist courses in gunnery, torpedo and signals. After the war had begun, the navy resorted to an increased promotion of warrant officers and the acceptance of Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, and Royal Naval Volunteer Supplementary Reserve officers for extended service. When Richmond urged the authorities to reconsider its policy that barred undergraduates registered at the University Naval Centres

¹⁹ Arthur J. Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies: The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy, Strategic Illusions, 1936–1941* (Oxford, 1981), p. 288.

²⁰ PRO, ADM 116/3060: Organization of War Courses and Training of Naval Officers for War.

²¹ PRO, ADM 116/3673 and 3674: Final report dated 30 June 1938. Admiral R. Leatham was appointed chairman 21 July 1937 and succeeded by Admiral B.C. Watson 13 September 1937.

from becoming regular officers, he was informed, “We have at present in the Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve a supply of officers sufficient to meet all our needs. . . .”²²

In retrospect, it may seem unfortunate that Richmond was not left in place at the Admiralty at least through 1919. One wonders at the possibilities had he remained as the director of training and staff duties during, at least, some of Beatty’s time as First Sea Lord that began in November 1919. Whether or not Beatty and Richmond, in tandem, could have pushed developments further or faster in the early 1920s is open to argument. The fact was that Beatty, at that point, had other uses for Richmond’s talents: namely, to restart the Senior Officer’s War Course at Greenwich.

Greenwich and the War Course

Richmond’s appointment to this important post in 1920–1923, coinciding with that of Captain Reginald Drax’s appointment as Director of the Naval Staff College, suggested that the “Young Turks,” or as they preferred, the “New School’s,”²³ time had finally arrived. The way seemed to lay open for a period of genuine reform with their hands on the helm. Drax, of course, was an original member of Richmond’s circle, one of the founders of *The Naval Review*, and during the war was a member of David Beatty’s staff. “The English won’t learn in peace,” Drax had suggested to Richmond in 1917,

but they *can’t* fail to learn from war. It may be 5 years, or 10 . . . but sooner or later the truth *must* come to light and a renaissance will result, followed by a sound system of education.²⁴

It was, alas, a rash prediction.

At Greenwich, Richmond was given wide latitude in terms of curriculum and permissive teaching methods. His pre-war connections with the College and wartime experience had convinced him that the scope of both the Staff and War Colleges had been overly constricted: lecture hours should be severely trimmed in favor of time for writing and for reflection. Education, rather than training, was the goal. His argument here was that the real value of the humanities—specifically history—as the principal vehicle, derived not from its teaching, but rather its study. Students did not learn simply by listening:

The idea is fallacious. A lecture can but touch on the fringe of a subject; it can indicate certain points, draw out certain principles, excite interest—or otherwise.

²² *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 223.

²³ National Maritime Museum (Greenwich), Richmond Papers, RIC 7/4, Richmond to Drax, 27 September 1917.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Drax to Richmond, 28 September 1917.

But it cannot replace the hard reading, the persistent study, the writing down, and the discussion of views by which alone a professional's knowledge is to be distinguished from that of an amateur.²⁵

This emphasis on history, as a process for creating and conditioning mental reflexes, would be a constant theme in almost everything he wrote on officer education.²⁶ He also wanted to institute the practice of submitting the better quality student to the Naval Staff, thereby involving the War Course and the Admiralty in practical ways with current problems.

Beyond these beginnings, it is difficult to say much more about Richmond's Greenwich record. The student paper proposal never worked out. His open methods were never entirely understood or condoned. Postwar spending cuts also had their impact. The infamous "Geddes Axe" fell especially heavily on Greenwich. No fewer than nineteen out of Richmond's twenty-four students and staff went into instant retirement. There was no genuine consensus within the navy as to the ultimate value of such education. Many officers regarded the War Course as a loss of valuable sea time, or as a comfortable berth for those awaiting commands afloat. Even before he left the college, Richmond knew he had failed. He was filled with resentment that neither his superiors nor his students seemed to appreciate what he was doing for them. Given their own educational records and the bases on which they were selected, it seems highly unlikely that many students could have benefitted fully from what Richmond had to offer. He called the whole experience "interesting but saddening."²⁷ Richmond, the naval professional, had failed in much the same way as Corbett, the civilian, long before him. By the time Richmond left Greenwich, he could take consolation in the fact that his personal reputation as a historian and as an authority on educational matters was recognized by others. Of these outside involvements, one of the more important was the creation of the Imperial Defence College. Richmond became its first commandant and held that post until 1928.

The Imperial Defence College.

In *Sailor-Scholar*, I examined at length Richmond's key role during a third period: shaping the concept of a tri-service, super war college from early committee stages through to its creation and earliest years. The details of that process need not be repeated here, but I would like to pursue a few points relating to the early expectations for the Imperial Defence College and its longer term value as a center of higher studies. The original purpose for bringing together

²⁵ *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 130.

²⁶ See especially his chapters, "The Place of History in Naval Education," and "The Uses of History" in H.W. Richmond, *National Policy and Naval Strength* (London, 1928).

²⁷ National Maritime Museum, K.G.B. Dewar Papers, DEW 6: Richmond to Dewar, 26 July 1923.

some thirty-five officers of captain and rear admiral rank in the British and Dominion military and civil services for a year's course in London was to encourage the development of a common approach to defence policy amongst a corpus of senior officers and officials "trained to look at the problem of war as a whole." Given a high-powered directing staff, an exceptional list of guest lecturers, and a nominal roll of early classes that reads like *Who's Who* of the high command in World War II, it was an impressive beginning. Certainly, by World War II, the Imperial Defence College was recognized as one sure path to senior command levels.²⁸

When the possibilities for the Imperial Defence College were first discussed in 1924 by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, their immediate reaction was not universally positive. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General the Earl of Cavan, let his colleagues know that he was "not enamoured" of the idea:

I do not believe in the production of supermen by teaching, especially if the pupils are of "middle rank," viz: roughly 40 years old.

I do not believe that any school but that of experience will guide officers of middle rank of the three services to the formation of correct and sound conclusions on war in its wider aspects.

I believe that such a scheme as is now before us would have been started long ago by the Germans—for instance—before 1914, and by the French and Japanese and Americans, either before or since the War if there was good value to be got out of it.²⁹

He continually acquiesced in his military and C.I.D. colleagues' decision to endorse the proposals, though not without adding the warning:

This proposal, if I understand its meaning correctly, would render the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee superfluous, and would remove the Chiefs of the three Services from the Personnel of the Committee of Imperial Defence to make room for the graduates of the Joint Staff College who, are, be it noted, of "middle rank."

There was never any such intention, but, with talk of a unified Defence Ministry still circulating through Whitehall's corridors, Cavan's concern was politically relevant.³⁰

²⁸ J.A. English, *The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign: A Study of Failure in High Command* (New York, 1991), pp. 46–47, 56.

²⁹ PRO, CAB 53/1: COS Memo No. 8, 25 January 1924; Appendix, "Consideration of Strategical Problems."

³⁰ *Ibid.*, COS Minutes, 6th Meeting, 8 January 1924. In a revealing separate "Note," Cavan made clear his personal view of the value of planning generally: "in the periods which must elapse between the first warnings and the outbreak of war and our expansion, many things would occur to stultify any plans made in the dark beforehand. Such plans would not only be useless, but might produce disastrous effects if any hint of their existence leaked out—as it probably would do in time. . . . I maintain that under

Similar concern was expressed in 1926 by all three service chiefs, Beatty, Milne, and Trenchard, that the college's graduates might indeed be the precursors of a single ministry that would overtake the only recently revitalized C.I.D. machinery, including the chiefs of staff. Even David Beatty saw the threat of "the possible creation of a super staff." The Imperial Defence College, in that sense, could be seen as a power grab by Maurice Hankey. The problem was that while the C.I.D. could be useful in bridging inter-service problems, it was unacceptable in making Admiralty policy. Beatty's army and air force colleagues' ambitions were also cause for concern. The Imperial Defence College, like the Committee of Imperial Defence, would fall through the cracks of service politics. No less forcefully than Jackie Fisher had before 1914, Beatty made clear his resentment of any encroachment on the Admiralty's ancient prerogatives:

He was convinced that a super-staff would prove unworkable. In regard to questions of Naval Policy and Strategy, the Chief of the Naval Staff was the only adviser of the Government. He was served by a Staff who worked up the cases for him, a super-staff therefore was unnecessary, and if created would not have the knowledge which was necessary for the full and proper examination of any particular problem. . . . If, however, Officers trained at the Joint College were utilized to replace Officers on the existing staffs, he felt the proposal would lead to very useful results.³¹

In a curious side-note, Beatty agreed to the name "Imperial Defence College;" he had no "strong feelings" in that regard, and thought this one "would not be provocative." It had another advantage in terms of contemporary policy issues which Richmond wanted the College to examine:

. . . it would obviate any possibility of the graduates of the new college entering as a body into the sphere of the planning of actual operations and would confine their activities to the plane of Imperial Strategy pure and simple.³²

Backed by Trenchard, Beatty was able to restrict the College's mandate, both in terms of which current issues would be pursued and the possibility of their carrying any real weight in future policymaking. In Trenchard's view, "The scope of the College was really instructional and it would, therefore be a mistake continually to refer actual problems to, and accept recommendations from the College on these problems." This emasculation of Richmond's initial concept

existing world conditions we require no plans of campaign (except for the small wars incidental to our Imperial position) except plans for protecting ourselves, and the territories for which we are responsible. . . . There is no need to try and justify our existence by wasting our time and energies in the compilation of elaborate plans for wars against hypothetical enemies."

³¹ *Ibid.*, COS Minutes, 27th Meeting, 11 March 1926, p. 15.

³² *Ibid.*, COS Minutes, 28th Meeting, 22 April 1926.

for the college, at its outset, would prove a serious blow to its long-term chances.³³

Richmond tried another approach in December 1926, when he appeared personally before the Chiefs of staff and inquired about access to the records of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Not surprisingly, they balked at *carte blanche* access. Trenchard pointed out that “the decisions of the Committee of Imperial Defence were often a compromise between conflicting points of view, and the issue of papers might at times lead to false impressions being formed.” Discussion then turned to an issue on which compromise clearly had not been achieved, namely “the creation of a common doctrine at the Imperial Defence College.” Beatty cut short this potentially explosive discussion, by pointing out that Richmond “had used the phrase ‘arrive at agreement on a doctrine’ rather than the phrase ‘common doctrine.’ He, therefore, apparently contemplated some form of compromise as a *modus operandi* in certain eventualities.” Richmond did not push his well-known differences with Trenchard and judiciously agreed that it would take considerable time to reach consensus. Even that “would be provisional and for the purposes of the scheme only, and not necessarily final.” He also wisely acquiesced in the decision that the college would not be ordered to begin real policy case studies for some time to come. All agreed, therefore, that when he was ready to proceed on such a study, Richmond could petition the Chiefs of Staff for permission and access to necessary documents.³⁴ When, less than two months later, during the college’s first weeks of operation, Richmond asked the Chiefs of Staff for some 120 papers, they were appalled. They trimmed his list to six general position papers and agreed to leave, thereafter, the whole question of document access to Hankey’s discretion.³⁵

All this evidence helped to confirm my sense that the Imperial Defence College was never taken very seriously. The Chiefs’ response to Richmond’s first annual Commandant’s report corroborates that impression. Prior to Richmond’s admission into their meeting of 23 February 1928, Trenchard and Milne expressed firm doubts about the achievements of the first course. In their view, some of the exercises appeared to be out of line with similar studies by the staff colleges of the individual services. This was hardly surprising, given the Chiefs’ opposition to document access. General Milne went further, suggesting that too many schemes had been undertaken with superficial results. He also worried that the Chiefs and their staffs had not been fully consulted by the college faculty, “perhaps because at this stage they were a little nervous of doing so.” Admiral Madden, who had succeeded Beatty as First Sea Lord, admitted he had time only to read one of the exercises; but that, in any case, he “did not take the

³³ *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 156.

³⁴ PRO, CAB 53/1: COS Minutes, 38th Meeting, 2 December 1926.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, COS Minutes, 43rd Meeting, 25 January 1927.

results of the schemes worked out at the Imperial Defence College too seriously.”

All three Chiefs were much less frank after Richmond was admitted to their meeting. He was advised not to force the pace on achieving a common wording of the principles of war; he was encouraged to undertake fewer exercises and to work more closely with the service staffs and, indeed, the individual Chiefs. Trenchard questioned the College's approach to international law relative to current air warfare thinking. He noted that Richmond's report “seemed to infer an unwillingness on the part of the other Services to accept the policy of the Air Ministry that attacks would definitely be carried out on the vital centres of enemy manufacture and industry.” Trenchard undoubtedly knew Richmond's personal views about the strategic and moral validity of strategic bombing, but could not get him to rise to that bait. The minutes show only that Richmond replied that Air Staff policies were not his concern, but rather international law and the need for air force students to understand it before coming to the College.³⁶ Years later, in response to a former air force student,³⁷ who criticized his anti-Royal Air Force bias at the college, Richmond admitted that, indeed, he had opposed Trenchard's claims that the principles of war did not apply to air power and that the Air Staff would make its own separate war plans, whatever the other services did. This, he claimed was “stated categorically to me by Trenchard” at a Chiefs of Staff meeting.³⁸ “I preached the oneness of war,” Richmond claimed;

It was that spirit I tried to infuse. We all, of all three services, worked in the most complete harmony at the College. We were too busy seeking to understand each others needs, to find ways by which we could combine our efforts, to descend to any petty squabbles about the greater or lesser importance of our respective Services.³⁹

Richmond could intimidate too. In 1928, he suggested that the Chiefs might personally lecture on the subject, “the Higher Direction of War.” They ducked his invitation, arguing that until their political masters had made firm decisions in this area, “it was inadvisable for any of the Chiefs of Staff to give such a lecture while in office.” They had no objection to Hankey, members of the Committee of Imperial Defence Staff, or “any other persons qualified to speak on the subject,” taking on that theme.⁴⁰

When Richmond submitted his second Commandant's end-of-course report, the Chiefs of Staff “took note” of it without comment, initiating what became

³⁶ PRO, CAB 53/2: COS Minutes, 65th Meeting, 23 February 1928.

³⁷ Sir Wilfrid Freeman, who became Vice-Chief of the Air Staff in 1942.

³⁸ Most likely the 65th Meeting.

³⁹ National Maritime Museum, RIC/7/4: Richmond to Freeman, 14 October 1942.

⁴⁰ PRO, CAB 53/2: COS Minutes, 75th Meeting, 23 February 1928.

a pattern of perfunctory nods for his successors' reports. In seeking some degree of independence from the Chiefs, he got indifference. Good commandants alone were never enough.

In my earlier work, I suggested that the college's failure to develop the full potential that Richmond had envisioned had a lot to do with the appointment of lesser men as commandants. This was ungenerous, for the list of his successors, through the 1930s and the post-World War II period, includes several highly distinguished officers, including General Sir William Slim and Air Chief Marshal Sir John Slessor. However, those with an academic bent or background in educational matters were in short supply. Richmond's species was, and still is, a rare one.

Assessing the practical value of the college's program is difficult. Little evidence about its early work has survived except as summarized in Chiefs of Staff memoranda and appendices. The college itself, renamed the Royal College of Defence Studies in 1971, holds no archives from that earlier period. The original library at 9 Buckingham Gate was placed in storage during World War II and moved to Seaford House when the College reopened under Slim. A librarian was not reappointed and the practice of trimming its holdings by discarding outdated works was adopted. A few ancient classics to include Wellington's and Nelson's *Despatches*, and Richmond's *The Navy in the War of 1739–48* were preserved in the Commandant's office.⁴¹ That Richmond's three-volume magnum opus should be kept safe from students' prying eyes is a revealing commentary on just how much his pioneering work is known or appreciated.

Otherwise the evidence is fragmentary and largely anecdotal. The recollections of the students⁴² emphasize the importance of the personal connections and friendships they formed, but provide thin gruel in terms of their studies and work. In his first annual report, Richmond had remarked upon this:

... although the work has been necessarily of an experimental character, it opened the eyes of all the officers and civilians who attended to the need of studying the problems of war as a whole, and it showed how easy it is for officers, sitting in continuous companionship, to discuss and come to agreement upon matters which contain the possibility of being contentious.

Valuable as these old-boy links undoubtedly were, especially during the war, by the 1960s, criticisms that this "continuous companionship" or extended sabbatical atmosphere might be getting out of hand prompted Labour's Defence Secretary, Denis Healey, in 1970, to appoint a civilian, Alastair Buchan, as

⁴¹ T.I.G. Gray, *The Imperial Defence College and the Royal College of Defence Studies, 1927–1977* (London: HMSO, 1977), p. 68.

⁴² E.g., see, *Ibid.*, pp. 32–52.

commandant to reinvigorate the course and to upgrade its academic standards. His mandate was to consolidate some recent piecemeal changes that had seen some increased “civilianization” of the curriculum: the appointment of a system of “visitors” in 1964, and an advisory board in 1965. European representatives joined the student body, and the syllabus was redirected more towards Nato and contemporary concerns that reflected Britain’s changing international position. Buchan’s tenure was an unsettling period and his changes were not universally welcomed. One of the more upsetting innovations was a requirement for an 8-10,000 word thesis. Even though this was quickly pared down, Richmond would no doubt have endorsed the idea.

The Legacy

In the years after his death, much of what Richmond wanted did come to pass largely because his ideas were generally in step with post-war government assaults on educational and social reform policies. In 1947, the entry age for Dartmouth was raised to 16, and finally to 17½ or 18 in 1955. As to the place of historical study in these developments, others more personally familiar with Dartmouth and Greenwich in recent years may wish to comment, but it appears to have fallen progressively lower on the agenda or to have been supplanted by more “applied” social sciences. In 1980, Professor Peter Nailor of Greenwich suggested that history had fallen victim to a general sense of the discipline’s irrelevance in the age of electronics and guided missiles, and to the services’ “discovery of management.”⁴³

On a personal note, I can say that Richmond’s ghost haunts the corridors of at least one distant part of the old Empire. I refer to The Royal Military College of Canada and the National Defence College, both located in Kingston, Ontario. The latter was founded in 1948 as a direct copy of the Imperial Defence College, and its progress since then has paralleled the story of the Royal College of Defence Studies in several respects. As a former student at National Defence College, I am only too aware of how much of Richmond’s original hopes and methods have been forgotten or distorted. Nevertheless, I am not convinced that those Canadian authorities who now see the National Defence College as an expensive luxury and intend, evidently, to close it down, are any more alert to its real possibilities than their British colleagues were in the 1920s.

The Royal Military College’s postwar record, thankfully, has been far more positive. Richmond’s advice and ideas reinforced the thinking of those who determined that when the College reopened its doors in 1948, it would be a tri-service, four-year institution, staffed by civilian professors and offering university level degrees in engineering, science, and arts. These were radical initiatives, which perhaps only a middle power with a small defence estab-

⁴³ “Naval History,” *The Naval Review*, 68 (January, 1980), p. 667.

ishment could afford to try. All Royal Military College degree programs—undergraduate and graduate—have included heavy doses of the humanities. In that regard, history and an exceptional group of historians, which Professor, and later Dean, George F.G. Stanley assembled and kept together through the first two postwar decades, were key elements in the experiment's success. Donald Schurman's early membership in, and later leadership of, the History Department accounts in no small measure for its continued productivity and influence. He put naval history and maritime strategy into the mainstream of the Royal Military College's curriculum. His book, *The Education of a Navy*, was based on the first course of naval history taught in an academic manner in any Canadian defence college. Through Schurman, Richmond's restless spirit found a congenial stopping place.

The Royal Military College has weathered criticisms about its roles as a military university and several serious attempts to "re-militarize" its curriculum by dropping such programs as History, English and International Studies.⁴⁴ It will likely survive similar challenges in the future. More immediate dangers come from the direction of hard-pressed budget balancers and an electorate in search of peace payoffs. As Richmond himself wondered, half a century ago, "Now everything is in the melting pot."

Discussion

Captain Sainsbury: That ends, gentlemen, what may be Barry Hunt's last contribution to our scholarship. May I suggest that we recognize our debt to him for that paper and for all his other contributions to our field, not by applause which he is now beyond, but by dedicating a silent moment of our time to his memory.

For the remainder of the discussion, see the section at the end of Chapter 6, pages 103–116.

⁴⁴ R.A. Preston, *To Serve Canada: A History of the Royal Military College since World War II* (Ottawa, 1991), pp. 132–35.

The Irresistible Force and the Immovable Object *The Naval Review*, the Young Turks, and the Royal Navy, 1911–1931

Commander James Goldrick, Royal Australian Navy

This article analyzes the creation and development of a British journal, *The Naval Review*. It seeks to demonstrate that the original conception of the Naval Society was as an instrument for reform through education, rather than an attempt to influence naval policy by the exchange of ideas. What mattered to the founders of the Society was the influence the *Review* would have on young officers.

This intent changed with the coming of the First World War. The Society then tried to use the *Review* to disseminate operational experience as a substitute for the mechanisms which the Royal Navy of 1914 lacked. Security problems alone doomed the venture to suppression by authority, but it was significant that the Admiralty failed to appreciate that there was a real need for improved information flow within the Royal Navy in 1914–1918.

The third and last attempt to employ the *Review* specifically as an instrument for change came in 1919, when the revived magazine began to include articles analyzing the errors of the navy in the Great War. This venture, too, ended with the imposition of Admiralty censorship and the *Review* embarked upon an existence which, if highly fruitful, was nevertheless attenuated by comparison with the original intent of the Society. The Royal Navy seemed very much the “immovable object.”

The “irresistible force,” however, proved not to be the *Review*, but the steady progress of officers—either members of the reform movement or sympathetic to it—into senior appointments within the Admiralty and the fleet. The performance of the Royal Navy in the Second World War indicated that many of the lessons of the First had been well learned and that the faults decried by the “Young Turk” reform movement had been cured. Even if some of its most prominent members did not enjoy the direct influence they desired, the fact that important Admiralty directorates and establishments such as the Naval Staff

College were under the control of their friends for much of the inter-war period suggests that the solutions were inevitable, with or without *The Naval Review*.

The Review may thus be described as an interesting symptom of reform, rather than its cause. Its real contribution has been to act as an outlet for the ideas of young and old, and—although it would require extensive research to establish the specifics—as a percolator for concepts, the time for which is not yet ripe.

The Naval Review.

This conference has its timing slightly askew. The eightieth anniversary of the meeting of six naval officers and a marine at No. 55 Bury Road, Alverstoke in Hampshire, which brought about the formation of the Naval Society does not fall until 27 October. But an error of one month in eighty years is little more than 0.1 percent. At this range, we are in the “danger zone” and must account it a straddle—so the three gunnery officers and the Royal Marine Artillery officer in the group would probably forgive us.

The idea for a correspondence society on naval topics originated in discussions between Captain Herbert Richmond and Commander Kenneth Dewar, which had begun in 1911 when both were serving in HMS *Dreadnought*. These discussions continued with increasing intensity after Dewar had been appointed to the staff of the Naval War College and Richmond to HMS *Furious*. The two officers' dissatisfaction with what was going on at the Naval War College was central to the ideas they were developing.

The college had been established in 1900 as the “Naval War Course” and was intended to provide education for officers of the rank of commander and above in “tactics, strategy [and] . . . the conduct of war as a whole.”¹ By 1903, the curriculum had settled down to encompass four months on naval history, strategy, tactics, and international law, with the addition in 1908 of “the investigation of problems sent down to it by the Naval Intelligence Division.”² Despite the comprehensive strictures which Dewar has directed against it because of the excessive amount of material which “dealt with the instrument rather than its use,”³ David Beatty's summary of 1911 was fair: “in parts interesting and in other parts purely a waste of time.”⁴

The problem was not so much with the course as with the students and the instructors. A detailed survey of the Royal Navy's educational system is outside the scope of this paper, but it is true that the Naval War Course represented the

¹ Vice Admiral K.G.B. Dewar, *The Navy from Within* (London: Gollancz, 1939), p. 128.

² Arthur J. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow: Volume I, The Road to War 1904–1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 33.

³ Dewar, *The Navy from Within*, p. 130.

⁴ Letter from Rear Admiral David Beatty to Captain Bryan Godfrey-Faussett dated 1 May 1911. Cited in Stephen Roskill, *Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty, The Last Naval Hero: An Intimate Biography*, (London: Collins, 1980), p. 43.

first exposure which most officers received to conceptual thought unrelated to mathematics or physics. The Royal Navy, at the time, had a very rigorous program, but it was a scientific and mathematical one. Kenneth Dewar has given, in his somewhat polemical autobiography, lists of the questions naval officers were expected to deal with in the sub-lieutenants and lieutenants courses. I want to emphasize that they officers academically demanding and required clever people. They could be intense; the sort of training officers underwent for gunnery and torpedo courses, particularly the advanced or “dagger” courses, was long; but it was not conceptual. In these circumstances, a four-month curriculum could only be, as Stephen Roskill has described it, “a poor substitute for a proper staff training,”⁵ particularly as the officers concerned were generally intended for command and were too old and senior for subordinate staff appointments.

The attempt to initiate such training began in 1912 with a naval staff course for junior officers within the Naval War College. The War Staff organization had been forced upon the navy in the wake of the Admiralty’s inept performance during the Agadir crisis of the previous year. The concept was greeted with very little enthusiasm and it did not get off to a good start. Dewar summed up the problem when he wrote “We had the opportunity but not the intellectual capital to float a staff.”⁶ The course could and did train its students in the processes of planning and mastery of detail required for the preparation of operation orders—what are described within the army as “staff duties.” But if it lacked instructors qualified to conduct seminars on strategy and tactics, to encourage debate and original thought, and to direct such activity into constructive channels, then it could not teach the *art* of war. Churchill made a sad assessment of the Royal Navy before the Great War:

We had more captains of ships than captains of war. . . . At least fifteen years of consistent policy were required to give the Royal Navy that widely extended outlook upon war problems and of war situations without which seamanship, gunnery, instrumentalisms of every kind, devotion of the highest order, could not achieve their due reward.⁷

Dewar defined the paradox in 1911:

. . . the great stumbling block to a sane educational system is that idea that discussion and criticism are opposed to a proper disciplinary system and until we learn to distinguish between discipline in work and discipline in thought little progress can be made. To obey an order is one thing but to make one believe is impossible.⁸

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁶ Dewar, *The Navy from Within*, p.154.

⁷ Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis* (London: Butterworth, 1923), volume 1, p. 93.

⁸ National Maritime Museum (hereafter NMM), Richmond Papers, RIC/12/1: Dewar to Richmond, 13 June 1911.

The Royal Navy did not have fifteen years, and people like Richmond and Dewar knew it. They needed to educate service officers, but they had no control of the mechanisms and they would have little chance of success if they attempted to work outside the service. Dewar and Richmond were coming to the idea that they needed to start short-circuiting the process, using people who were qualified to run the Staff Course and, of course, to be staff officers. Referring to the business of teaching at the Staff College as they taught mathematics or physics, Dewar wrote:

A sustained counter effort to the educational fallacies of the present time depends on an enormous free criticism. I do not think that the Royal United Service Institute would publish anything on the subject that is worth publishing. The best way of doing things is through Lord Northcliffe [proprietor of *The Times*] or someone of that sort but if we write sincerely [?] on such a subject several in the Navy recognise the writer.⁹

What did Richmond and Dewar intend? It is quite clear that Richmond's plan was for an organisation of junior officers for their own self-improvement, a "Correspondence Society for the Propagation of Sea-Military Knowledge."¹⁰ He hoped that the members would write articles which would be compiled into a journal and printed, being sent out "so many copies to each member, which he will distribute to his friends and to try to rope in new recruits."¹¹ Apart from a retired flag officer to act as secretary and editor, Richmond intended to exclude both senior officers and persons outside the navy from the Society, as well as officers below the rank of lieutenant. This was a deliberate step. In their discussions, Richmond and Dewar evolved the thesis that naval officers were capable of higher education only between the ages of twenty and thirty-five.¹² "One of our arguments . . . can be summed up in the saying that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. It is only the young dogs you can influence. . . ."¹³ Since nothing in the naval training system prepared officers for staff work in the widest sense, that is, for original and analytical thought, and because the administration of the navy was incapable of either recognizing or remedying the deficiency, any reform would have to be through indirect means. By organizing an enclosed correspondence society, Richmond and Dewar could gain access to the young, while enjoying freedom of discussion without the need for official sanction. Thus, Richmond attempted to work outside the system to achieve educational change.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ See Arthur J. Marder, ed., *Portrait of an Admiral: The Life and Papers of Sir Herbert Richmond* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), p. 89: Richmond Diary Entry, 27 October 1914.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/12/1: Dewar to Richmond, 13 June 1911.

¹³ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Admiral William Henderson, 11 December [1914?].

Contributions would be anonymous. This was at Richmond's insistence, over the opposition of both Dewar and Commander Reginald Plunkett, but he intended it "with no view of concealing a writer's identity for reasons of shame . . . it is employed solely in order that there may be complete freedom of discussion."¹⁴ He planned it not just as a protection for authors within a disciplined and hierarchical service, but as an encouragement for criticism which did not have to be restrained by sensibilities as to rank or hurt feelings. It would avoid the risk of officers using the forum for self-glorification, or for that besetting sin of the Royal Navy in the Fisher era, factionalism. What in fact Richmond was evolving was a precursor to the concept of "Chatham House Rules." He accepted that "Time may—indeed will—make a difference,"¹⁵ but the policy of anonymity was necessary until naval thinking had matured considerably.

The meeting of 27 October 1912 confirmed the proposal to provide, as one present put it, "some means of regenerating Service intellects before Armageddon,"¹⁶ and the Naval Society was formed by the seven officers who attended. Before we examine that organisation's fate, however, some facts should be noted about the nature of the group of officers who formed it. First, these men were all relatively junior. All but two were either on the staff of the War College or were students on the War Staff course. Second, they represented the intellectual cream of the service. All but one of the officers present had completed the Advanced courses in Gunnery or Torpedo, which were highly selective and academically demanding (even if in no way "educational" in the sense that Dewar or Richmond meant the term).¹⁷ Although it has been said that the quality of officers on the initial Staff Course was not high, five out of six naval officers at the meeting achieved flag rank, two on the active list. The only one who did not, retired early, but had been knighted for his war service as a commander at the age of 37, something I find no parallel to in the twentieth century. This says something about the quality of officers who had applied for the inaugural staff course.¹⁸ Third, contrary to the image we may have of a tightly knit coterie known as the "Young Turks," they were largely Dewar's choice. Richmond did not even know the names of two,¹⁹ as he noted in his diary.

¹⁴ Herbert Richmond [writing anonymously], "Introductory" *The Naval Review*, 1 (February 1913), pp. 1–4.

¹⁵ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, 18 April [1913?].

¹⁶ NMM, Dewar Papers, DEW 27: Commander the Honourable Reginald Plunkett [later Admiral the Honourable Sir Reginald Plunkett-Erle-Drax], excerpt from diary entry, 27 October 1912.

¹⁷ See *The Monthly Navy List* (London: HMSO, September 1912) for entries on the officers concerned and on the complement of the Naval War College.

¹⁸ Marder is less complimentary about the quality of the first staff course, but this judgement seems to have been derived directly from Dewar's comment in *The Navy from Within*, p. 154, that "some of the officers selected for training seemed to be below the average ability." Even if some were inadequate, the war staff course officers, as a group, were very definitely *above* the average, as their later careers indicate.

The initial scheme did not survive unchanged. Soon after the October meeting, Richmond left his command and, on half pay between appointments, went on a cruise to the West Indies with his wife for her health. In his absence, Dewar took up the task of setting the Naval Society to work. Richmond had intended that Admiral Sir Reginald Custance act as the secretary-editor of the new organisation, but the latter set so many conditions that Dewar was forced to look elsewhere. This was fortunate. Custance was a considerable intellect and something of a historian, strategist, and naval thinker, who did valuable work in the first years of the twentieth century, but, he was not popular within the navy. As Director of Naval Intelligence, he had proved dogmatic and self-assertive,²⁰ and he was also a leading member of Lord Charles Beresford's group of anti-Fisherites. That Richmond should think of him indicates the lack of intellectual activity elsewhere in the contemporary flag list.

The solution was provided by Dewar's request to Reginald Henderson, first lieutenant at the gunnery school, HMS *Excellent*, to solicit the help of his uncle, the retired Admiral William Henderson. The latter proved an ideal choice. Henderson accepted the invitation with enthusiasm. He was to remain editor for eighteen years and to him, more than anyone, must go credit for the evolution of *The Naval Review* and for its survival. Henderson brought the experience of a long concern with educational reform within the service. He had been a moving spirit in the 1872 attempt to form a "Junior Naval Professional Association," with much the same intent as now motivated Richmond and Dewar. Henderson knew that this "Professional Association" had foundered after only two years because of its artificial—and unworkable—restriction in membership to officers of lieutenant's rank. Even with its wider constituency, the Naval Society would be repeating the error if it did not include the flag list, both active and retired.

Henderson also took a less grimly Calvinist view of the potential for educating senior officers. "One is never too old to learn," he wrote,²¹ and he embarked upon a campaign to recruit admirals, both active and retired. Henderson went further. Such a society should include the emerging navies of the Dominions—which had not occurred to Richmond²²—and it should seek official support and informal

¹⁹ Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral*, p. 89: Richmond diary entry, 27 October 1914. As to who was a member of the "Young Turks" and who was not, this seems to have varied over time, place, and contemporary concern. By 1918, it is fair to say that the group and their fellow travellers, not all of whom agreed with all of the activities of Richmond or—particularly—Dewar, included in addition to the founders, Captain (later Admiral) Alan Hotham, Captain (later Admiral Sir) Reginald Henderson, Commander (later Vice-Admiral Sir) Geoffrey Blake, Captain (later Admiral Sir) William Wordsworth Fisher, Captain (later Admiral Sir) Geoffrey Dickens, Captain W.D.H. Boyle (later Admiral of the Fleet the Earl of Cork and Orrery), and Lieutenant Commander (later Rear-Admiral) W.S. Chalmers.

²⁰ Matthew Allen "Rear Admiral Reginald Custance, Director of Naval Intelligence 1899–1902," *The Mariner's Mirror*, 78 (February 1992), pp. 61–75.

²¹ "Agag" [pen name], "A Note on the First Fifty Years of The Naval Review," *The Naval Review*, 51 (January 1963), p. 11.

political backing. Active in welfare and local government work, Henderson had very good connections with both government and opposition. He was shrewd enough to realize that such influence might prove important to the Society.²³

In the meantime, Dewar had discarded the original idea of a correspondence society in favor of issuing a quarterly journal to be entitled *The Naval Review*.²⁴ He considered that the principal threat to the Society, if authority took against it, was Article 14 of *The King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions*, which prohibited "all persons belonging to the fleet to write for publication or cause to be published either directly or indirectly any matter or information relating to the naval service unless the permission of the Admiralty has first been obtained." The Society's defence would rest on a legal technicality. A journal circulated only to approved subscribers was not in the public domain and could not—according to legal counsel—be a "publication." This was a fragile thesis and one which the Admiralty's administrative and legal officers have never accepted. Besides, as Dewar noted, "the Admiralty has a habit of twisting regulations to suit its own prejudices."²⁵

Henderson and Dewar together pursued an energetic recruiting campaign. Membership stood at sixteen in November 1912. In February 1913, it was fifty-eight; by March, the number had risen to 282. This figure would double in 1914 and, again, in 1915.²⁶ Because Henderson was able to prevail upon his contemporaries, and the junior members of the Society theirs, the membership was reasonably balanced—at least within the Executive Branch. What it was not, as was to prove, was united in any conception of what the Society was about or what license the *Review* should be accorded. Political or religious movements rarely survive the experience of mass proselytizing unscathed. The Naval Society was not an exception.

²² NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, 3 March 1913.

²³ The 1915 civilian membership included:
 The Right Honourable A.J. Balfour, MP
 The Right Honourable Austen Chamberlain, MP
 Julian Corbett
 The Honourable Sir Thomas Ewing, KCMG
 Sir W. Grahame Greene, KCB
 The Right Honourable Sir Edward Grey, Bart, KG, MP
 Viscount Haldane of Cloan, PC
 Lord Leith of Fyvie
 E.G. Pretymen, MP
 The Earl of Selborne, PC, KG, KCMG
 Lord Stonham, GCMG, GCSI, GCIE

²⁴ NMM, Dewar Papers: DEW 5.

²⁵ Dewar, *The Navy from Within*, p. 156.

²⁶ See Table 1. Figures compiled by Commander Michael Craig-Waller, DSC, RN, for the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration of *The Naval Review*.

The core of the movement consisted of Richmond, Dewar, Henderson, and their fellow travellers. It is fair to say that *The Naval Review* of 1913 and 1914 did act as their instrument for the education of a navy. The articles were written almost wholly by the founders, and their matter and tone focused closely on “what Kempenfelt called the ‘sublime’ parts of our work—strategy, tactics, principles. . . .”²⁷ Richard Hill has declared that “the quality of the first two years’ issues was immensely high,”²⁸ and he is right. The articles by Richmond and Harding, Halliday of the Marines, and the Dewar brothers concentrate on issues of defining the aim, command and control, and appreciation of the situation. They amount to a syllabus for the principles of staff and command in war.

There are articles which concentrate on specifics—divisional tactics being one theme—but the particular is largely eschewed in favor of the general. Richmond was not pleased with all the early contributions, some of which he felt strayed too far from specifically professional naval concerns. He was particularly critical of the articles by Reginald Plunkett on “Home Defence,”²⁹ reasoning that “we have so much to learn in our naval affairs that we need be in no great hurry to discuss political ones.”³⁰ Richmond’s line was that articles should be included in the *Review* only if they contributed to the preparation of officers for their professional duties. He wrote, “When our minds are clear on the part that concerns us we can extend our vision to the part that concerns us less.”³¹ Richmond was prepared to take a wide view of what was acceptable and what was not, but he knew irrelevance when he saw it. This intellectual rigor resulted in some interesting exchanges within the pages of the *Review*.³²

It is notable that the *Review* did not at this time suffer criticism. Perhaps such immunity resulted from the fact that the tone was too high for some of the prospective opponents of what was being attempted. Potential critics did exist, within and without the ranks of the Society. Henderson was successful in enlisting some 73 flag officers on the active and retired lists by 1915, but he did not get them all and he certainly did not capture a heart and mind with every subscription. The response of the Board of Admiralty was typical and significant. Both the First Lord, Winston Churchill, and the First Sea Lord, Prince Louis of Battenberg, were enthusiastic about the concept. Battenberg called it “ad-

²⁷ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/1/8: Diary Entry of 27 [19?] October 1912. See also Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral*, p. 89.

²⁸ Rear Admiral J.R. Hill, “The First Two Years,” *The Naval Review*, Seventy Fifth Anniversary Number (1988), p. 63 *et seq.*

²⁹ R.X. [Commander the Honourable Reginald Plunkett, RN], “The Influence of an Efficient Home Defence Army on Naval Strategy,” *The Naval Review*, 2 (February 1914), pp. 23–38.

³⁰ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, 6 March 1914.

³¹ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, 22 March 1914.

³² See [Captain H.W. Richmond, RN], “Some Historical Aspects of Home Defence—A Reply to R.X.” *The Naval Review*, 2 (May 1914), pp. 141–59 and R.X. [Commander the Honourable Reginald Plunkett, RN], “Home Defence—A Reply by R.X.,” 2 (August 1914), pp. 254–63.

mirable”³³ and joined up, together with his elder son, Prince George, who was to be a frequent wartime contributor. But his thoughts of providing formal support got nowhere. The Admiralty issued no Fleet Order sanctioning the *Review* and no exemption from Article 14 was granted. Richmond was inclined to reject nervous suggestions that this was insufficient, saying, “Damn these fellows with their whine for ‘Official Sanction’ . . . besides that we *have* official sanction. Battenberg has cordially approved and joined, Churchill has ordered it to be taken in at the Admiralty. What more do these people want?”³⁴ Dewar had a clearer eye. Personal approval did not amount to official sanction.³⁵

Attitudes to *The Review* within the service were mixed. Three opinions, garnered in later years, from Jellicoe, a vice admiral in 1913, Francis Kennedy, a captain, and A.B. Cunningham, a lieutenant commander,³⁶ indicate this ambiguity. Jellicoe, despite having written his share of critical articles as a junior officer, complained that *The Review* was “a channel which led to young officers having views which were detrimental to discipline and bad for the spirit and morale of the service.”³⁷ Francis Kennedy, who was a supporter, believed that the *Review* and its founders were always considered as dangerous radicals by a wide body of opinion. As he told his son, the label “Bolshevik” came later, but it would have been apt enough in 1913.³⁸ Finally, A.B. Cunningham was even more straightforward. He thought the journal “subversive.”³⁹

The troubles of the *Review* began with the war. Richmond and Henderson quickly realized that the flow of theoretical articles would dry up, as prospective authors found their energies occupied elsewhere. There was, however, real potential for the *Review* in other directions. Henderson thought to use it to circulate firsthand accounts of battle and campaign experience. Richmond was initially more ambitious. In September 1914, he proposed that a whole issue be given over to a critical examination of Britain’s maritime war aims, its strategic situation, and the policies which the navy should pursue, particularly in relation to trade warfare. Here again we see Richmond attempting to use the *Review* as an alternative to inadequacies in existing systems. He suggested that Corbett could write many of the papers on these subjects and declared, “it would be a superlatively valuable thing to, and would interest everybody. The confidential nature of the *Review* makes it possible for us to do more than we could otherwise.”⁴⁰

³³ Barry D. Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond 1871–1946* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1982), p. 35.

³⁴ NMM, Dewar Papers, DEW 6: Richmond to Dewar Letter, undated [March 1913?].

³⁵ Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 36.

³⁶ The rank of lieutenant-commander was not formally introduced into the Royal Navy until 1914.

³⁷ Churchill College, Cambridge. Papers of Admiral Sir Frederick Dreyer, DR YR 3/2: Jellicoe to Dreyer, 24 January 1931.

³⁸ Interview with Captain F.H. Kennedy, R.N, son of Admiral F.W. Kennedy, 27 December 1979.

³⁹ As remarked to H.G. Thursfield, his term-mate. Captain A.B. Sainsbury, RNR, to the author, 17 June 1987.

In the event, Corbett, already enlisted to write *Naval Operations*, was unavailable and Henderson's plan for "after action" reports prevailed. The idea was certainly right—in principle—and it was taken up with enthusiasm by officers of all ranks. The topicality and relevance of the early war issues must have had something to do with the rapid increase in membership. So did the fact that the *Review* was acting as the only available medium for the dissemination of operational experience. Herein lay the difficulty.

Richmond was mistaken if he thought that the Admiralty shared his view of the journal as being "confidential." No matter what precautions the editor took, magazines entrusted to the standard mails were subject to interception or theft. Despite Henderson's later protests, this was undeniable, as was the Admiralty's comment that it would be impossible to maintain adequate membership records under the stress of war.⁴¹ It is highly significant that at no stage does the Admiralty staff seem to have appreciated that the *Review's* activities resulted directly from the lack of machinery within the service to circulate the experience of war. Henderson's suggestion that the *Review* be entrusted to the confidential service mails was rejected as impractical, but nothing was ever offered in its place.⁴²

Objections to the *Review* came quickly. As early as October 1914, Vice Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee complained about an article on cruiser warfare.⁴³ In May 1915, after that month's issue, Jellicoe, the C-in-C Grand Fleet, pointed out that the *Review's* February and May issues "contained a lot of information which would be useful to the enemy."⁴⁴ The articles cited were ones which dealt with the battles of Coronel and Falklands in 1914. Jellicoe particularly objected to a statement which suggested that the British squadron lost at Coronel "felt themselves no match for the enemy."⁴⁵ Since this article had already appeared in public in *The Times*, the implication that Jellicoe disliked the entire concept of the *Review* and was seizing the slightest excuse to criticize it was clear. Certainly the Admiral wanted the journal suppressed for the duration.⁴⁶ Richmond dismissed Jellicoe's more soundly based protests about the release of information in an article from HMS *Kent*⁴⁷ with a fierce declaration of his intent:

⁴⁰ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, [13 September?] 1914.

⁴¹ Public Record Office, ADM 1/8423: Deputy Secretary of the Admiralty [Oswyn Murray] Minute. Undated, but probably early June 1915.

⁴² PRO, ADM 1/8423.

⁴³ NMM Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, 27 October [1914?].

⁴⁴ See Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral*, p. 156: Diary entry, 12 May 1915.

⁴⁵ "Narrative of the Action off the Coast of Chile," by an officer of the *Glasgow*, *The Naval Review*, 3 (May 1915), pp. 159–61. Reprinted from *The Times*, 11 December 1914.

⁴⁶ PRO, ADM 1/8423.

⁴⁷ [Lieutenant V.H. Danckwerts], "The Action off the Falkland Islands. The Chase of the German Squadron and the *Kent's* action with the *Nürnberg*," *The Naval Review*, 3 (May 1915), pp. 143–53.

To suppose that the [German] officers . . . , have not learnt all these lessons about fire, smoke, fumes, etc. is to argue them fools, which we know they are not . . . it [is] far better to inform our own people than to keep them in the dark for fear of giving something to the enemy.⁴⁸

At this level, Richmond was tragically correct. The *Kent* was nearly lost at the Falklands battle because of a fire amongst excessive amounts of ready-use propellant. If this lesson had been learned by the rest of the Royal Navy, at least one major unit would not have sunk at Jutland in 1916. Unknown to Richmond or Henderson, however, there were things appearing within the *Review* which should not have been released.

Over Henderson's objections, the Admiralty first ordered that all articles be submitted to censorship and, then, that no copies should be sent overseas. Henderson felt that censorship was unreasonable and such limitations on circulation unworkable, despite the Admiralty offer of a confidential *Navy List* to assist in determining which members of the Society were on overseas service and which were not. His correspondence with officialdom became increasingly frequent and heated, to the point that the Deputy Secretary, Oswyn Murray, complained "it has now reached appalling dimensions & if it is decided to stop the *Review* entirely I think the whole Admiralty will not contain the letters that will be written."⁴⁹

The censor, Captain Sir Douglas Brownrigg, worked amiably enough with Henderson, but he was apprehensive as to the attitude of authority, being particularly concerned about Jellicoe, and was soon proposing that, "It is for consideration whether the printing and circulation of this magazine, containing a mass of valuable secret information, should not be suspended altogether during the war."⁵⁰ Oswyn Murray did not agree with this judgment and explained to the Secretary that Brownrigg was "rather anticipating a criticism from the C-in-C . . . than expressing his own view."⁵¹

However, events were moving in other directions as the First Sea Lord's staff took a hand. Circumstantial evidence⁵² indicates that in June 1915 Captain Dudley Pound, Extra Naval Assistant, noted that an article from HMS *Glasgow*⁵³ contained several very damaging admissions, including information as to German and British gunnery and an acknowledgement that British ships had breached Chilean neutrality. Most serious were two direct references to the decryption of German

⁴⁸ Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral*, p. 157: Diary entry, 12 May 1915.

⁴⁹ PRO. ADM 1/8423: Deputy Secretary to Extra Naval Assistant to the First Sea Lord [Captain Dudley Pound] Minute Undated, but probably June 1915.

⁵⁰ PRO. ADM 1/8423: Chief Censor to Deputy Secretary Minute, 14 June 1915.

⁵¹ PRO. ADM 1/8423: Deputy Secretary to Secretary Minute, 27 June 1915.

⁵² Within ADM 1/8423.

⁵³ [Lieutenant M.P.B. Portman and Assistant Paymaster N. Hirst], "The Work of the *Glasgow* and the Action off Coronel," *The Naval Review*, 3 (May 1915), pp. 378-97.

signals.⁵⁴ Pound showed this material to Everett, the senior Naval Assistant, and the two took the matter up with the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Henry Jackson. The alternatives were to forbid the inclusion of operational material or to suppress the *Review* for the duration. The latter solution was the easier and was adopted.

In a limited professional sense, the First Sea Lord's staff were quite right. Knowledge of the extent of penetration of German cyphers by Room 40 was confined within a very small circle, which did not at this stage include many of the "Young Turks." It does not seem to have included the Censor. Whatever Henderson might say, the *Review* was not a secure publication, but the failure to appreciate that the fleet required some means of disseminating experience is indicative of the Admiralty's administrative inadequacies, both conceptual and in scale. The navy did not yet fully understand the proper functions of a staff; it had as yet insufficient personnel to function as a staff.⁵⁵

The Admiralty, logically enough, offered no specific reason for the suppression and Henderson took it badly. A sharp exchange followed between the editor and the First Sea Lord. Admiral Sir Henry Jackson provided the final word when he declared that, although he was a "subscriber, reader and admirer" of the *Naval Review*, he was "on public grounds not disposed to alter my decision."⁵⁶ The Naval Society never discovered who had been responsible for the decision, although Richmond and Henderson nursed suspicions as to the part played by Jellicoe and the Admiralty secretariat. In the latter case, they were mistaken; both Grahame Greene and Oswyn Murray seem to have been sympathetic to their cause, if exasperated by the editor's methods. An aggrieved Henderson commented that there had been a "want of openness and a fear of truth in the methods employed"⁵⁷ and Richmond suggested that

. . . the whole episode is rich in the causes which have made our failure in the war. The lack of clear ideas, the dislike of even a hint of criticism, the confused notions as to what 'security' means . . . all these are evident in the events connected with the suppression.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ PRO. ADM 1/8423: See Typed Minute, Undated, listing the security breaches within the *Glasgow* article. This is accompanied by a request in Pound's hand to Oswyn Murray for the papers relating to *The Naval Review*. Further evidence of Pound's role is contained in NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, noting that Captain Reginald Hall, an active supporter of the *Review*, had been told "that there was in the May No. something which would have been of greatest use to the enemy. He had it pointed out to him by Pound & when it was pointed out, he said, he saw how useful it would be to the enemy."

⁵⁵ Jon Sumida has done much work to illuminate the Admiralty's administrative inadequacies and their effect upon the policies of the Royal Navy. See his "British Naval Administration and the Age of Fisher" in *The Journal of Military History*, 54 (January 1990) and "British Naval Logistics 1914-1918," paper delivered to the University of Illinois History Conference, October 1990.

⁵⁶ Agag, "A Note on the First Fifty Years of the Naval Review," p. 13.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁸ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, 29 September 1915. See also Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 38.

They were right, but only partly right, since what they were trying to achieve could only operate sensibly through official channels and as part of internal processes of analysis.

Henderson was able to obtain informal assurances that the *Review* would be permitted to revive after the end of the war and he had to be content with this, collecting material with the idea of issuing copies to cover the war years in retrospect. Moves to resume circulation began in 1918. At Richmond's suggestion, Henderson approached the new First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, who saw no objections to reviving the *Review* or to issuing it without censorship.⁵⁹ This seemed to Richmond to give the opportunity he had long sought—to use *The Naval Review* to “find out where we went wrong and why; trace errors to their source and put right that which we find wrong.”⁶⁰ The *Review* would be used as a vehicle to detail and examine war experience; it would function as an operations analysis division, which the Admiralty was only just setting up with the commissioning of Naval Staff Monograph studies of the war.⁶¹

At this point, Richmond's support from the other “Young Turks” was less sure than it had been in 1912. Dewar was on his side, but he had suffered the same alienation from the senior ranks of the navy as Richmond. The war careers of others in the group had been much less difficult. Plunkett,⁶² Roger Bellairs, and W.S. Chalmers had all served on Beatty's staff and earned his good opinion and his friendship. Reginald Henderson and W.W. Fisher had distinguished themselves at sea and in the Admiralty. These officers could expect to prosper further when Beatty came to Whitehall. More to the point, they were now sufficiently senior to implement reforms which their experience had shown them to be necessary. In their eyes, the *Review* was a useful forum for debate and original thought, but it did not have to attempt to be a substitute for mechanisms which were now coming under their control. They were themselves the solution.

The attempt to run the *Review* on free lines was also facing a fundamentally unsympathetic Board. Wemyss' liberal instincts were rapidly soured after the Armistice by public criticisms of the Admiralty's performance. Ironically, these were led by Jellicoe, who had painted a sorry picture of naval preparedness in 1914 in his book, *The Grand Fleet: Its Creation, Development and Work 1914–1916*. Combined with Beatty's impatience and agitation at being kept from Whitehall, there developed within the Admiralty a certain measure of institutional paranoia. Criticism of past naval actions, Wemyss complained bitterly, only resulted in the present Board getting the blame.⁶³

⁵⁹ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, 30 September 1918.

⁶⁰ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, 19 November 1918.

⁶¹ These would eventually be distributed within the Royal Navy as confidential books.

⁶² Reginald Plunkett had undergone a change of name as a consequence of accepting the inheritance of a considerable property in Dorset. He was now Plunkett-Ermler-Drax, customarily shortened to “Drax.”

⁶³ Library of the University of California, Irvine. Wemyss Papers (microfilm) as collected by Professor Arthur J. Marder: Wemyss to Walter Long (First Lord), 3 April 1919.

This was very quickly demonstrated in 1919, when a formal complaint was made about *The Naval Review*. It was acted upon, despite the fact that the article concerned was a narrative of the chase of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* in 1914.⁶⁴ Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne, who had been commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean at the time, was then in the midst of a campaign of self-justification and sought to suppress this account. It was not directly critical, but the article made it clear that Milne's dispositions had been less than apt. His complaint referred to a paragraph which described the British ships' breaking off from shadowing the *Goeben* on the night of 4 August. Presuming that this was as a result of orders from the Admiralty to Milne (as it was), the author noted, "it struck us at the time that someone must have forgotten the rule of going for your enemy's position."⁶⁵

Milne was cunning. The criticism implicit was not of him but of the Admiralty. The latter took the bait and wrote to Henderson, "taking fearful exception" to the article and demanding to know the author's identity.⁶⁶ This was too much for the elderly admiral, who replied with dignity that the name had been "conveyed to me in strict personal confidence, so that I am not at liberty to reveal it." Henderson also provided the Admiralty with a sharp and presumably uncomfortable reminder that Jellicoe's book, which had appeared in the same month, included "criticisms of Admiralty and State policy of the most damaging kind . . . revealing countless defects in the Navy's equipment, all of a previously strictly confidential and secret nature."⁶⁷

The battle, which lasted until August 1919, was bitter and had its victims, including Admiral Kennedy, who was forced to acknowledge his authorship and received a formal expression of Their Lordships' displeasure.⁶⁸ The treatment of the Naval Society was equally brutal. Admiralty Monthly Order 1663/19 forbade officers to submit articles to the editor without first having received Admiralty permission, which, as Richmond noted, effectively killed the *Review*.⁶⁹ Henderson declared himself willing to submit articles for approval as a workable alternative, but this the Admiralty would not accept.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ [Rear Admiral F.W. Kennedy], "Narrative from the *Indomitable*: The Escape of the *Goeben*," *The Naval Review* (February 1919), pp. 110–26.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁶⁶ Agag, "A Note on the First Fifty Years of The Naval Review," p. 14. The author was then Rear Admiral Francis Kennedy who had been Captain of the *Indomitable*, which is obvious if you read the article.

⁶⁷ Papers in the possession of the Editor of *The Naval Review*. [Hereinafter, Editor's Papers]: Henderson to the Admiralty, 12 March 1919.

⁶⁸ In fact, this was of little concern to Kennedy. He did not expect to be employed again, under either Wemyss' or Beatty's regimes. Interview with the late Captain F.H. Kennedy, RN, 27 December 1979.

⁶⁹ Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral*, p. 342: Diary entry, 18 May 1919.

⁷⁰ Editor's Papers: Henderson to the Secretary of the Admiralty, 17 May 1919; Secretary of the Admiralty Letter NL 17589, 9 August 1919.

The Naval Society had strong political connections and it was prepared to use them. Examination of the papers held by the editor of *The Naval Review* indicates, however, that the Society was not initially united in its plan of campaign. The moderating influence was Drax, now Director of the Staff College at Greenwich, and perhaps, politically and professionally, the most astute of the group. Henderson and Richmond were inclined to go public immediately, with questions in Parliament and a press campaign. Henderson's plan was to publish the correspondence between the Society and the Admiralty, if the latter did not give way. Richmond asserted that the Admiralty would "find they have exposed themselves to such a charge of stupid bureaucratic action, and of secretiveness in matters of unimportance, that they will give way."⁷¹

Drax was all for using political influence, but he believed that private discussions with the Society's friends, such as Lord Haldane and Lord Curzon, leader of the Government in the House of Lords, would be more useful. Curzon was "quite prepared to challenge the Admiralty on the matter,"⁷² and he was not a man that the First Lord, Walter Long, could ignore. The combination of private appeal and implicit threat eventually proved effective, perhaps assisted by the fact that by August 1919 the Board of Admiralty was increasingly composed of officers who were Beatty's men, not those of Jellicoe or Wemyss.⁷³

The momentum of the *Review* had now reached the point where it was irresistible. Beatty would become First Sea Lord in November with Roger Bellairs as his naval assistant. In August, Henderson's renewed appeal for easing the restrictions carried a wealth of implication. The new brooms at the Admiralty would not care to be seen as the "instruments of suppressing the first sustained effort at encouraging the development of thought in the Navy."⁷⁴

The compromise to which the Admiralty agreed matched Henderson's original suggestion that he should be responsible for submitting articles for approval. The salient point was that he did not intend to inform the Admiralty of the authors' identities, thus providing some measure of protection against official retribution. The Admiralty's Order⁷⁵ made the editor responsible for obtaining clearance.⁷⁶

⁷¹ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, 26 August 1919.

⁷² Editor's Papers: Curzon to Henderson, 14 May 1919.

⁷³ Vice Admiral Sir Osmond deB. Brock became DCNS on 4 August 1919; Rear Admiral Sir Ernle Chatfield took over as Fourth Sea Lord in June, and Rear Admiral W.C.M Nicholson as Third Sea Lord on 2 July. Vice Admiral Sir Montague Browning had become Second Sea Lord in March and Rear Admiral J.A. Fergusson, who had been DCNS, relieved Rear Admiral Alexander Duff as ACNS on 4 August. Wemyss was the only naval officer who remained in the same Board appointment between February and August.

⁷⁴ Editor's Papers: Henderson to the Secretary of the Admiralty, 20 August 1919.

⁷⁵ Admiralty Monthly Order 3937/19.

⁷⁶ Editor's Papers: Secretary of the Admiralty Letter NL 26101, 20 August 1919.

With this stipulation, officers on the active list could resume their participation in the *Review*.

For the next seven years, the journal functioned under this regime of censorship. Barry Hunt has noted that “this generally unrecognized fact had a profound influence on *The Naval Review* as an effective vehicle of reform during these critical years of adjustment from war to peace.”⁷⁷ This is true, but it is also true that the role of the *Review* had changed, whether Henderson, Dewar, and Richmond acknowledged it or not. The impetus for reform was moving in other directions. Richmond had a successful, if less than personally satisfying, sojourn running the Senior Officers’ War Course between 1920 and 1923, while Drax was director of the Staff College with Thursfield as his deputy. In 1923, Reginald Henderson took Drax’s place at Greenwich. Bellairs remained Naval Assistant to the First Sea Lord until 1925. Other members of the group were occupying increasingly senior and—as was to prove—influential appointments within the Admiralty. The process of reform was under way. However incomplete it may have been, the results between 1939 and 1945 would be undeniable.

What the *Review* did become was a mechanism for debating particular topics—officer training and the Fleet Air Arm being perennial subjects before 1939. And it was an outlet for junior officers’ first attempts at writing. The pool of contributors, as Henderson was acutely aware, was too small, but it was of high quality. Richmond and the other founders did what they could, and there were some particularly interesting debates on subjects such as the control of seaborne trade, in which many of the “Young Turks” had been closely involved during the Great War.⁷⁸ Amongst much younger contributors, John Creswell, Russell Grenfell, and Stephen King-Hall are featured repeatedly. Stephen Roskill’s first published article appeared in 1929.⁷⁹ The “batting average” for promotion to flag rank, amongst those who did not later make names for themselves in the academic and literary worlds, was also extraordinarily high.

Henderson was convinced that the censorship arrangements were unsatisfactory and that they stymied the development of the *Review*. In 1921 he tried without success and then waited until December 1925 before renewing his appeal for a revision of Admiralty policy. The change in the attitude of the Naval Staff is made clear by the support which Henderson received. At this point, W.A. Egerton, a frequent contributor, was Director of Naval Plans, and Alan Hotham, Richmond’s second in command in the *Dreadnought*, was Director of Naval

⁷⁷ Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 102.

⁷⁸ See especially the 1925 volume for contributions on “Seaborne Trade in War” and the “Control of Sea Transport,” by a wide range of authors with 1914–18 experience in trade control.

⁷⁹ “The Monroe Doctrine,” *The Naval Review*, 17 (1929), pp. 117–28. It is of interest that Stephen Roskill owed his nomination as Official Historian to the Naval Secretary, Rear Admiral Richard Onslow, remembering that Roskill had written frequently and well for *The Naval Review*.

Intelligence, with K.G.B. Dewar as his deputy. Egerton made a strong case for the *Review*, decrying the censure of Kennedy with the declaration that the criticism expressed in the *Goeben* article, “if criticism it be, is impersonal and, far from doing harm, is good for naval officers to read and take to heart.” Egerton framed two questions: Did censorship hinder the *Review* and would a lack of censorship prejudice naval discipline? He summed up: “In peace, . . . the dissemination of ideas and their discussion cannot fail to do good to a service bent on improving itself from within.”⁸⁰ Egerton received strong support from most of the other elements of the Naval Staff, although there were objections from the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Frederick Field, and the Secretary of the Admiralty, Sir Oswyn Murray. The latter felt that a lack of censorship for the *Review* would amount to an open stable door and proposed that a representative of the Director of Naval Intelligence work with Henderson as censor.⁸¹

Although the censorship issue was eventually taken formally before the Admiralty Board at the insistence of the First Lord, Egerton’s arguments were endorsed in full by the First Sea Lord, David Beatty, and they won the day. The latter was particularly, and sensibly, scornful of the “DNI representative” idea, since this would simply result in the blame for any indiscretion being placed upon the unfortunate censor, who could not be aware of the concerns of every department within the Admiralty.

The Board decided in favor of freedom for the *Review*, with the provision that the editor should be assisted by a committee of approved officers, with that arrangement to be reviewed on Henderson’s supersession as editor.⁸² The arrangements were soon placed under strain when, later in 1926, the Director of Naval Air Services strongly objected to an article entitled “The Fleet Air Arm.”⁸³ Anyone who has worked with naval aviators will recognise this piece as the genuine article; it is a cheerful and straightforward narrative which does not hesitate to decry the Royal Air Force connection, the insufficiency of flying pay and Observers. The Admiralty’s difficulty was that the essay dealt “with . . . a subject [so delicate] that it is best left alone.”⁸⁴ While admitting that the approach was immature, Dewar flew to its defence and declared, “so far as Naval Intelligence Division is concerned this must not be assumed, for it contains nothing of value to a potential enemy, no personal criticisms and nothing subversive of naval discipline.”⁸⁵ The eventual consensus was that the article probably did not matter very much and that the *Review* should be left alone. The Secretariat still did not accept the editor’s arguments about the journal not being a “publication” within the meaning of

⁸⁰ PRO. ADM 1/8708: Director of Plans Minute, 6 January 1926.

⁸¹ PRO. ADM 1/8708: Secretary of the Admiralty Minute, 18 January 1926.

⁸² The first committee consisted of: Henderson, Richmond, Drax, K.G.B.Dewar, and Geoffrey Blake.

⁸³ [Lieutenant H. StJ. Fancourt, RN], “The Fleet Air Arm” *The Naval Review*, 14 (May 1926), pp. 315–17. Fancourt retired in 1949 as a Captain with a DSO.

⁸⁴ PRO. ADM 1/8708: DCNS [Vice Admiral Field] Minute, 19 July 1926.

⁸⁵ PRO. ADM 1/8708: D/DNI Minute, 15 July 1926.

The King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions, but it was agreed that the benefits of the arrangement outweighed its disadvantages.

Henderson had his freedom, but in the sense that the *Review* was originally conceived, there was little time to exercise it, both in terms of the active careers of many of the Young Turks and in terms of their capacity for work outside the service, while holding demanding and responsible posts. The last, best effort was Richmond's campaign for smaller warships in 1930.⁸⁶ In this campaign, Richmond and Henderson were here employing the *Review* in a two-fold use. First, the journal provided a forum for the exposition of Richmond's views which would force the Admiralty "to shew cause for their adherence to large ships."⁸⁷ This was reform in the direct sense, but it would also place the arguments before the whole navy in a way that was not otherwise possible. The idea of education continued.

Barry Hunt in *Sailor-Scholar* has commented upon the "less than encouraging" results of Richmond's essay, "What is it that Dictates the Size of the Fighting Ship?"⁸⁸ He was right to suggest that there were inadequacies in the arguments raised against Richmond, but the extent of *general* participation in the debate should not be underestimated. There were, in addition to the articles specifically organized by Henderson, seventeen replies in 1929. Of those of which the authorship is known, the rank of the writer varies from rear admiral to lieutenant commander. There were sixteen more items in the 1930 issues—and one of the contributors was a sub-lieutenant. The majority of the authors range between lieutenant commander and captain; an overwhelming number were on the active list. These writers may have missed Richmond's point and they might not have been working on the same intellectual plane, but they were clear demonstration that the concepts of free debate and critical thought which Dewar and Richmond had long sought to fix within the Royal Navy were prospering.

Conclusion

It is fair to leave *The Naval Review* at this point because this "last stand" by Richmond foreshadowed the role that the journal would play in the future. Henderson died in 1931, and by 1933 Drax would be the only founder still on the active list. The reforms of the movement were in place in the institutions of the Royal Navy. The new editor, Admiral Sir Richard Webb, would pursue a much more soft-spoken approach to controversy than his predecessor. Perhaps this was due to Jellicoe's advice to "put it on sounder lines in the future."⁸⁹ Certainly, he

⁸⁶ For this topic, see chapter 10: Eric Grove, "Richmond and Arms Control."

⁸⁷ NMM, Richmond Papers, RIC/7/1: Richmond to Henderson, 4 June 1929.

⁸⁸ [Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond], "What Is It That Dictates the Size of the Fighting Ship?" *The Naval Review*, 17 (August 1929), pp. 409–33.

⁸⁹ Churchill College, Cambridge. Papers of Admiral Sir Frederick Dreyer, DRYR 3/2: Jellicoe to Dreyer, 4 April 1931.

took a conciliatory line with the Admiralty which resulted in an agreement with the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Frederick Field, that any “doubtful” articles would be submitted to the Deputy Director of Naval Intelligence “for a decision as to whether, in the public interest, their appearance should be withheld.”⁹⁰

Free-thinking articles continued and so did free thinking responses. We do not know the authorship of articles during Webb’s years as editor, 1931–1950, but their tenor remained interesting and generally topical. Webb was concerned by the decline in membership on the active list and by the increasing average seniority of the contributors.⁹¹ Yet, the airing of contemporary topics went on, even if there were more reminiscences and purely historical pieces. The future of the Fleet Air Arm and the employment of aircraft were vexed questions until 1939, so were officer entry and training and personnel issues. They have remained abiding concerns in the years since.

How, then, has *The Review* functioned? First, it has been an outlet for clever junior officers wishing to make their views known to a wider audience. Second, it has served as a means for their seniors to make their own ideas known, without awkward ramifications for the policies it is their duty to implement. These are the continuing benefits of anonymity, which were not wholly foreseen by the founders. Third, the *Review* has been a forum for the exposure and maturing of ideas whose time has yet to come. It is very difficult to claim a specific relationship between *Review* articles and later naval policies, but it is fair to say that the journal has played an essential part in developing an atmosphere for change. Policies such as adult entry for officers, the improved status of engineer and supply officers, the general list and, more recently, the principal warfare officer, have all been aired, in one form or another, in the *Review*, before their implementation. The bias towards personnel matters is probably inevitable, but articles on improved joint service procedures and cooperation, the future of British defence strategy and a navy without aircraft carriers have contributed their mite towards the development of naval thinking.

The Review is thus less than its founders intended and more. It is educational in the widest sense, because it acts as the Royal Navy’s forum for debate on change with the least possible exposure to external distractions. It is also educational because it provides the means by which the young can try their hand at dealing with subjects which would not otherwise enter their professional ken. And it is educational because, as Henderson wrote, “One is never too old to learn.” Nor, may one add, need one be too old to teach. There must be some life in a journal in which the First Sea Lord personally reviews Jon Sumida’s *In Defense of Naval Supremacy* and gives it his *imprimatur*. Richmond would have liked that very much.

⁹⁰ NMM, Dewar Papers, DEW 27: Admiral Sir Richard Webb note to Vice Admiral K.G.B. Dewar, 11 September 1939.

⁹¹ See Agag, “A Note on the First Fifty Years of The Naval Review,” for a survey of the concerns of the journal in this period.

Membership of *The Naval Review*—1915

Rank	Number	Rank	Number
Executive Branch			
Admiral of the Fleet	3	Commander	166
Admiral	20	Commander, RAN	1
Vice-Admiral	19	Lt. Commander	170
Rear-Admiral	33	Lieutenant	241
Captain	132		
Engineer			
Engineer Commander	6	Engineer Lt. Commander	1
Paymaster			
Fleet Paymaster	4	Paymaster	1
Staff Paymaster	1	Asst. Paymaster	4
Medical/Miscellaneous			
Surgeon General	2	Surgeon	1
Fleet Surgeon	1	Chaplain	4
Staff Surgeon	1	Naval Instructor	1
Civilian	12		
Royal Marines			
Major General	1	Major	9
Brigadier General	1	Captain	16
Colonel	1	Lieutenant	3
Lt. Colonel	3		
Army			
Colonel	2	Lt. Colonel	1

Notes: Figures compiled by Commander Michael Craig-Waller DSC, RN, from the 17 March 1915 Membership List, including additions to 9 April 1915 and the "Roll of Honour." It is noteworthy that, although the Naval Society had achieved extensive penetration amongst lieutenant commanders and lieutenants in the Executive Branch, its membership in the other branches was very limited. This would change in the decades ahead.

Discussion of the Papers Written by Professor Donald M. Schurman, Dr. Barry Hunt, and Commander James Goldrick

David Brown: It has often struck me that Canada has produced some quite distinguished naval historians. Quite distinguished is the English understatement you understand, but has there been a particular influence, Don, which has really pushed you, the Canadians that is, towards the research into history, naval history, in particular, and to produce so many naval historians?

Donald Schurman: I know that Barry Hunt would have been interested in having me say this as well. When I was in Cambridge in 1952, having a great difficulty with my thesis, by a series of accidents I got catapulted to London and into the hands of Brian Tunstall. He discerned very quickly that I knew no naval history and that I was trying to write a thesis about the sea and the British empire, so he began to teach me. Interestingly, my connection with him lasted until his death in 1970, but it didn't involve just me, because not only did he teach me quite a lot, but my interests certainly rubbed off on Barry, and then also on Alec Douglas, because Brian Tunstall came and took my job at the Royal Military College of Canada in 1965 when I was on sabbatical and I lived in his house in Blackheath. I had the best of the exchange deal, I can tell you that. It was a marvelous situation, and I am pleased to have this chance to mention it because he was an absolutely unrivaled teacher. Take a small group of people and he would never patronize anybody. He would initiate a subject by saying "As you know" and then feed you a couple of pieces of information, then in a few minutes you began to nod your head and get excited and realize that you had read that before somewhere and you would gradually piece it together. I think that his influence both on me, and on Barry, who saw a lot of him in London as well, and I suppose other Canadians, who don't happen to be here in the military history field, was very, very strong and has stayed with us; they stay indeed. I think that if Greenwich reached across to Canada, it came across through Brian Tunstall, and I'd like to acknowledge that here.

Alec Douglas: I have to add to what Don has said about Brian Tunstall. Barry and I took the first postgraduate course ever offered by the Royal Military College, History 500, and Brian Tunstall taught it. It was a very interesting experience because Brian said to us, "You tell me what course you want me to teach you,

lay out the parameters and I'll put that up to the college and that will be the course you get." He taught us by the tutorial system, which is not that common in North America, and which is extremely useful. He exposed us to what he considered the right interpretation of naval history which was not Callender's.

Eric Grove: I'm glad that Geoffery Callender's name has just been mentioned, because he was going to appear in my short, shortish statement now. I think he is quite important as to some weaknesses in the Royal Navy's study of history and the problems the mainstream navy has had in approaching history. First, just one or two points in Don's extremely interesting paper. He argues that the naval officers to whom Corbett was lecturing didn't share a common background. I think I would argue that they shared a background more common than in virtually any other time in the twentieth century, in the sense that they'd all been through *Britannia*, they'd all gone to sea as midshipmen, admittedly in varied ships, many of which, of course, were sailing ships. Chatfield went to the War College in the spring of 1911, and he had been to sea, first of all, in two sailing ships. His first two ships were sailing vessels. Then, they'd done the sub-lieutenant's course, where they'd engaged in some quite rigorous mathematical intellectual calisthenics and, so, they did in fact share a common background. Admittedly, it probably didn't fit them to understand Corbett's lectures that well. He used to start off, one is told to always say, "Now gentlemen you understand this subject much more than I do," and then go on to put forward a complex argument. I think the reaction of the officers to that put-over was extremely good. I have found this, too, in talking to naval officers of various ages.

The interesting thing, though, is that we said earlier that Corbett had failed. Actually, Corbett was criticized for not having failed, but for having succeeded. In the 1931 *Naval Review* condemnation of Corbett, it said that it was his fault that the Royal Navy adopted such a defensive policy in the war. Remember the infamous statement in the introduction to his official history of Jutland: the idea that one shouldn't go all out for decisive battle may not correspond with those of the Admiralty. So, in fact, he was blamed by his critics for having imbued the navy with an overly defensive doctrine, giving them the ideas of dangerous landbound strategists like Carl von Clausewitz, for example. My own feeling is that he actually did have some effect on the way the naval officers who'd heard his lectures thought. I think he did have some effect on the doctrine that was adopted. I would argue for better, than worse, in the First World War. So, I'm not sure that he was such a failure in that sense. Where, of course, he didn't entirely succeed was in getting the kind of history he wanted in the initial training of naval officers. I remember when I was working on the introduction to some *Principles of Maritime Strategy*, I found a very interesting paper in the Corbett Papers where he says "We discussed how history ought to be taught and we decided in the first two years at Osborne, they

ought to be told all about naval heroes." They got the perfect person at Osborne to do that. Geoffrey Callender, the author of *Sea Kings of Britain*, wrote that quite brilliant book for little boys of twelve and thirteen to tell them precisely how these famous officers of the past had acted. The tragedy was, and I say this with feeling, having tried to teach history at Dartmouth at various times, that *Sea Kings of Britain* became the textbook for the entire course in all four years. It was Dartmouth's failure, actually. There is some correspondence between Corbett and one of the Dartmouth masters about 1910 or so; I think there were plans for a book which would have been more advanced, which would have been, as it were, a halfway house between the simplicities of Callender and the more sophisticated ideas that they were going to be—what we might now call strategic studies at the War College. They never got it. That was a great tragedy, causing a bifurcation in the historical and strategic education of naval officers which lasted for a very long time. In fact, it led people to regard naval history as nothing more than *Sea Kings of Britain*. That was very dangerous. It's very unfortunate that such a dedicated teacher as Jeffrey Callender was so taken out of his death and had such a negative and evilist disastrous effect on the relationship of the Royal Navy with historical study.

A point worth making is that the Selbourne scheme must not at all be confused with the Britannia's scheme. They were, self-consciously, extremely different. The Osborne-Dartmouth scheme was a strange mongrel. It did try to introduce science and technology at an early stage. It was very advanced in that sense and some very good people came out of it—Lord Blackett, for example, who left the navy, but who tended to regard the intellectual training he got as being quite good. What it was trying to do, actually, as now appears from some of the latest work on it, was to use a rather practical approach to modern engineering as a way of teaching handiness, the same kind of handiness that people have learned in sails, masts, and yachts. That was Fisher's concept; it might have been quite a flawed one. Dartmouth was never, has never been, controlled by a civilian staff and the naval staff has always tended to have the last word. There were times when the civilian staff were able to get significant changes and, in fact, in the 1930s, with the creation of the Alpha classes, there was some intent to try to improve the intellectual education of the people there. The teaching of history has been a problem more than anything else because of the lack of time to put into it. It's been very difficult to cram it in, and, therefore, one has had sometimes to take a highly didactic approach, an approach that Don Schurman might not like that much, of trying to teach the principles before the history, because there hasn't been enough time, and that sometimes has failed.

James Goldrick is exactly right to say that the system had, in fact, become quite good by the 1920s. It's a great tragedy that Richmond wasn't able to have some direct impact into the creation of the naval staff of the 1920s. If you read Chatfield, for example, you'll see that he defines quite clearly what a chief of naval staff was supposed to be doing. He was supposed to be distilling the

experience of the fleet for the naval staff. The kind of thing that at times *The Naval Review* tried to do.

Donald Schurman: I take the point of the common background of the sailors that Corbett was lecturing. They weren't a group of people, however, that one could apply to a set intellectual background, so it would be recognized by any graduate school or anywhere else today. I should think, they must have been a pretty mixed bag intellectually.

Secondly, the business of strategy. Before 1914, I don't think that Corbett convinced the navy that the idea that a bang-up battle doesn't always fix everything and I don't think he had much success after that. Officers had listened to it over a long period of time, but it only really hit the headlines in 1916. Then, people were really trying to get at Jellicoe for not being very active with the Grand Fleet after Jutland, indicating that perhaps he hadn't conducted the battle in the best possible way. That could be argued, but Corbett wrote directly to Lord Sydenham to say that he knew very well that what he accused him of in the press was not what was taught at the college. Secondly, he complained that he knew as well that he had allowed him to see the material before it was given. He agreed with it, and he agreed with it when the second edition came out in the "Green Pamphlet," and he agreed with it when *Some Principles* was published, and Corbett didn't see why Sydenham came out and made him out to be a liar, although he didn't use that word.

Now as to the question of Callender, I must mention, because we did mention Brian Tunstall a minute ago, and talked about books for boys, that Brian Tunstall wrote a book called *The Realities of Naval History*. Page by page, it was meant to refute all the foolishness in Callender's *Sea Kings of Britain*.

They say at Greenwich, Callender used to walk around with a copy of Brian's book in his pocket and all the parts that were done in red ink were direct criticism of him as the director of the College. It affected my career somewhat, as well. If I may make a comment, Admiral Sir Casper John came to the Royal Military College of Canada when he was First Sea Lord. I was told before he came that he would ask penetrating questions to the historical staff. All he said to me was, "Do you believe in *Sea Kings of Britain*?" I said, "No sir, do you teach that?" He replied, "Of course not! Oh, come and sit by me." So I did sit by him at lunch and they brought up about six good bottles of red Beaujolais that they had in the cellar. Then, I said, "ask for this stuff," and I gave them the number. So they brought up two bottles and we drank it in splendor and I savored half the afternoon with him. He was very adamant that *Sea Kings of Britain* was not the way and he did say that he thought that Corbett's influence by about 1935 or 1936 was strong enough and that the Callender approach to naval history had gone by the board.

I'd like to say one other thing. Perhaps I should ask Alan Pearsall after James Goldrick has replied to this question. I think Callender, in some ways, was

underrated. He had a place in the application of British naval history and Alan has talked about it with me on a number of occasions, but first, James Goldrick.

James Goldrick: I can't speak for Dartmouth as to the cultural effect of the *Sea Kings of Britain* upon the officers of the college, but I can speak, having discussed it at length, about the effect of it on the graduates of the Royal Australian Naval College. It was remarkable. I think Eric's point that the *Sea Kings of Britain* was right for the first couple of years is a very good one, and it was a very good book for that. It was Callender's tragedy that he was, in the naval educational sense, and I'm not talking about his work at the Maritime Museum, but in the naval educational sense, far out of his depth. In the Richmond Papers, there is a very long and very pained letter from Geoffrey Callender to Richmond in 1924, [printed below by permission of the Trustees of the National Maritime Museum] asking why Richmond attacked him about his teaching of history. Richmond was taking up this point that Callender was saying the wrong things to the sub-lieutenants, things which Richmond was prepared to accept for cadets, not for twenty-year olds. The problem was that the system as originally conceived under the Selborne scheme was never allowed to operate.

National Maritime Museum: Richmond Papers RIC 7/4:

Professor Geoffrey Callender to Admiral Richmond, 22 December 1924

Memorandum from

PROFESSOR GEOFFREY CALLENDER, M.A., F.S.A.

Department of History, Royal Naval College, Greenwich, S.E. 10

22 Dec., 1924

Dear Admiral Richmond,

Many thanks for your letter. As to the review, I have only to say that it was written a long time ago—in fact, before you left England. I was expecting it to appear 18 months ago; & assumed that the Editorial Board had qualms (of some emotion or another) and suppressed it.

It is one of the minor tragedies of naval education that you and I are so much opposed to one another. What is the basis of this?

You repudiate the idea that you would instil into N.O.'s "Sea Military Knowledge." I also repudiate the idea that I teach "archeology." I have been teaching N.O.s of one kind or another for nearly 21 years; and for the greater part of that time I have been striving and writing "biography." I admit readily that for the last 3 years I have done all the donkey-work of the Society for Nautical Research—but only to prevent that institution from appearing in the

bankruptcy court. Practically all my papers in the *Mariner's Mirror* have been "biographical," or sidelights on biography.

Where then lies the chasm between us?

We are both devoted to the improvement of the N.O.'s education on the anti-technological side, & we are both addicted to the study of naval history.

Carrying points of resemblance one step further, I suppose I may say that we are both agreed that it is fruitless for N.O.s to study the history of the Navy unless they find in that history the guidance which is to make good officers of them.

Where then is the cleavage?

I have examined the matter as judiciously and dispassionately as I can, & I am brought to the following conclusion.

You, I believe, are of opinion that the lessons deducible from past history should be drawn by the teacher.

I trust that I am not doing you an injury in attributing this opinion to you.

Now to my mind—at least in the sphere of HISTORY—YOU are the ideal N.O. That is to say, you read history and you do more; you get down to the very bed-rock of history; and having done so, you draw your conclusions. You show where this man went wrong, and where this other fellow, keeping a grip on first principles, brought about a sweeping success.

That is just what is wanted. Every N.O. should tread in your footsteps & do his best to live up to our example.

No quarrel so far.

Then where do I come in?

I am a "teacher," a professional teacher. I was certificated as a teacher in "Arts" by Oxford Univeristy 28 years ago; & I have since been certificated by the B. of Education, & have conformed to every ordinance which can be imposed upon teachers. For 28 years I have taught on the average 8 hours a day from Jan. to December. I have *no* knowledge of any branch of Science: I am not qualified to teach the simplest mathematics. I took the Honour School of History at Oxford 28 years ago & have been teaching History ever since: general history for 28 years, naval history for nearly 21. That is an experience which Mahan, Laughton and Corbett all alike lacked. Laughton taught Maths. & Meterology here from 1873 to his retirement. History with him—until his retirement—was a sideshow.

There is just one other point about myself that I might get out at this point. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to agree and concur with naval officers—if it were humanly possible. I have lived with them for nearly 21 years & have always found them of all men the most tolerant & the most lovable. If they were to talk to me about any aspect of war, I should be the meekest of meek disciples.

But there are limits, & these are reached when people attempt to dictate to me about the *teaching of history*.

As a teacher of history I rebel with every ounce of pugnacity in me against the ghastly heresy that it is the Duty of the “teacher” to draw lessons from the past.

That is not the function of the teacher: it is the function of the pupil.

As a pupil of—let us say “all the famous men who have written about naval history”—you have had an amazing career, a career matched with interest & much genuine admiration by all who harvest in the same field. But as a teacher of history, you are (if I may speak bluntly) less impressive. You do not teach the Fine Art which was old in Aristotle’s day: you teach the lessons which *you* have drawn from the old wars.

Now we want all N.O.s to learn the lessons which the old wars teach. But other N.O.s *must* tread the path which Admiral Richmond has trodden. There must be no meretricious methods—no short cuts. History has made Admiral Richmond what he is; & History will do the same for other officers of similar capacity & application. But they must go to History direct & to the teachers of History direct: & while there are those who are anxious to emulate *your* example, there will always be more work for me to do than I can possibly manage.

But when I am asked (as at present) to galvanize the dead mass of inert facts (which I am accused of ladling out to my classes) with an infusion of sound doctrine (drawn from the past for the guidance of the future), my reply, I trust, will always be that I will go to the stake rather than do so.

What strikes me as being so intensely, so farcially ludicrous, in the present strife between the Professor of History at Greenwich and his critics, is that if the Professor is defeated and the critics get their way: then the rationale of naval warfare will be propounded to naval officers by civilians. If that is not the *reductio ad absurdum*, then it is useless to look further: Though the wise man might add that, if you engage a Professor of History and then determine for him what he shall teach & what he shall not, you are modelling your conduct on the fool in the fable who bought a dog and then insisted on doing the barking himself.

With all good wishes for the New Year

Believe Me
Yours sincerely,
Geoffrey Callender

Alan Pearsall: Callender was, no doubt, a very good teacher. I think he originally began at Osborne and probably got himself rather fixed on that age level because he never actually taught any senior people until he came to Greenwich after the war. Probably he was, to some extent, rather fixed in his outlook. Osborne was abolished as part of the economy scheme, rather than the fact of its inadequate facilities. Osborne and Dartmouth were merged, but then he moved to Greenwich where again, I think, he was teaching mainly sub-lieutenants. Certainly

from my experience of interviewing admirals still alive in the 1960s, they would always mention *Sea Kings of Britain*.

It is interesting to note that there was a movement of interest in naval history in the U.K., beginning particularly with the founding of the Navy Records Society in 1893, and continuing later with the Foundation of Society of Nautical Research in 1911. Those who are familiar with the history of the Navy Record Society will know that a lot of its early editors, and certainly members of its council, were in fact, quite senior naval officers. We have mentioned today, H.J. May, who is an interesting character whose premature death may have been a very serious loss to the navy in the particular aspect we are interested in. We have also had Slade and Ottley, who again, were clearly quite favourable to the higher level on the subject of war, yet they seem to all have got swamped in the long run by something, whether it was an innate feeling that thought and discussion is subversive or whether there were other factors that came into it.

David Brown: I suppose as chairman I shouldn't say much, but I have been waiting for somebody to mention the Navy Records Society. To me, it is a spring, actuating at the end of the nineteenth century, which actually started the interest in naval history going. I was beginning to wonder if it had so little effect, and I would like some comment on that.

James Goldrick: I think it was probably important, but I'm not sure anybody has done any formal work on it. Certainly when you look at the memberships of the council of the Navy Records Society for about the first twenty-five years of its existence, there are always one or two, and sometimes three, officers of flag rank on the active list, who are members of the Navy Records Society. Also in the early volumes there are a large number of contributions by naval officers of collections and documents.

Charles Fairbanks: I have a question about Commander Goldrick's very interesting presentation. I wondered if you could contrast the strategy and the fates of the reformers in the Royal Navy of the 1890s with those of the post-World War I period? It always seemed to me a strange paradox that people like Fisher and Percy Scott, who were so rebellious and so scornful of the Admiralty's stodginess, convention, and so forth, nevertheless, prospered in a society that was much more authoritarian than the British society that was emerging before, even after, World War I. Yet, they rose to much more powerful roles than people like Dewar or Richmond. They were, in a sense, more successful than the people who got into some kind of dynamic, getting into trouble with the authorities and then becoming embittered to a counterproductive degree. I wonder if you could comment on the differences.

James Goldrick: First of all, I would say that John Fisher was not a rebel, in any sense of the word. If you look at him as an operator in the 1880s and 1890s, I have the impression that he was remarkably skillful at gaining friends, at keeping them, and at ensuring that that if he was going to be critical, the criticisms were directed in such a way as to achieve an effect without damaging himself.

I think Percy Scott was a classic victim. He was successful to a certain degree, because the times were right for the reforms he wanted, but I think his career after the gunnery and paint work scandal was not what he wanted. I think the difference between those people and the ones we are talking about, such as Dewar, is that the rebellion is done at a junior level. I think the point that particularly shows in Dewar's case is that you cannot rebel too early. I have to say, having now looked at some of Dewar's Naval Staff papers, particularly those associated with *The Naval Review*, I have a lot of problems as to his balance and objectivity. I can see why he was not considered seriously for promotion to flag rank on the active list. One of his minutes defending an article in *The Naval Review* that was causing problems in 1926 is of such a tone that you really wonder that he should have left it, having written it the night before, and thought about it again in the morning. I think the problem you get is the level, the rank, at which you attempt to rebel.

Rear Admiral Hill: This is going to be a bit of a statement as the editor of *The Naval Review*. First, I ought to talk a little bit about the black box. It is on a shelf in my study and it is an old tin trunk that I suspect held Henderson's cocked hat at one time. It now holds *The Naval Review* archive, or the more precious parts of it. I have made it available from time to time to people like James Goldrick. What very good use, I might say, he has made of it in that masterly summing up. I would only disagree with one or two things that he said. I believe that, in 1919, one of the principal opponents of *The Naval Review* was indeed Oswyn Murray. James has seen some of the minutes on the Admiralty phase which I have not, but certainly the tone of Murray's correspondence with Henderson was extremely stiff. He may have been working to instructions, like the good civil servant, or he may himself have been opposed to it.

The Naval Review did start as a corresponding society and its funny the way that tradition has continued. We do get correspondence going on from one issue to another, often of a very substantial sort, and that is one of the great joys of *The Naval Review*. I think that the correspondence columns do carry on, in a very lively way, the sometimes rather stodgier introductions of topics.

What I really want to do is to try to draw together the three excellent presentations we have heard, because it does seem to me that *The Naval Review* and Corbett and Richmond, between them, started off a process of liberation, and the feeling of liberation, particularly in the first two years' issues of *The Naval Review*, which as James has said, were at a very high level of abstraction. The

feeling of liberation is enormous. There were ideas bursting to get out. They were often very highly abstract ideas; they were often very lively ideas. That, it seems to me, was pervasive. Certainly it happened through the personalities of the new school, but it was, I would contend, far more widespread than that. There was a feeling after the war that, liberated from Grand Fleet battle orders, liberated from the more hide-bound ideas, then new ideas could take wing, not only in the staff colleges but in the fleets.

Chatfield threw away the enormously detailed Mediterranean Fleet exercise orders in 1929–32 and said, in a famous passage in his book, “I could not train the fleet in this way. Officers and men must be constantly ready to respond to signals.” W.W. Fischer trained the fleet in night-fighting in the 1930s, and that showed its results at Matapan.

There were other things that happened in World War II, early on particularly. I would contend that the impact of the RNVR again increased the liberation. My point is that in the 1920s and '30s this liberating process that had started in the Edwardian days carried on in the early Georgian days before World War I. It was making its way through creeks and inlets, throughout the navy in the 1920s and 30s and prepared the service for its success in the Second World War. I would say just one thing, that there are still people, inside and outside the Royal Navy, who are a bit suspicious of *The Naval Review*.

I sincerely hope that we will always have a very serious approach in *The Naval Review*, but there is room for humor. I do use contributions from the staff colleges and from the Royal College of Defence Studies. Some of the weightier contributions are, indeed, initiated from there. They are always by members.

Captain Montenegro: I would like to add just two points, perhaps ideas of further research on Corbett's influence in other countries. Unfortunately, we have no German historian here today, but I would like to point out that, for some commentators, Captain Otto Gross's doctrine of sea warfare for Germany appears to be some sort of a derivation from Corbett. I don't know really what the impact of Gross's book was on German naval thinking in World War II. But anyway, the book existed [*Seekriegslehren im Lichte des Weltkrieges* (Berlin, 1929) translated into Spanish as *La doctrina de la Guerra Maritima: Según las enseñanzas de la Guerra Mundial* (Buenos Aires, 1935)] and I believe Gross was a prestigious writer.

Secondly, we have had Oscar Di Giambardino translated into Spanish. He wrote in the mid '30s and his book is called the *Art of the War at Sea* [*L'Arte della Guerra in Mare* (Rome, 1937)]. In my own perception, I think it is a good book, but it appears to me to be some sort of summary of Castex, Italian style.

Donald Schurman: I must confess as soon as I heard about this conference that there was a bit of a problem. In one sense, people think of Mahan as being Mahan

for the ages, as far as the exercise of sea power is concerned. I think of him very often here as a universal thinker. I don't dispute that, but when it comes to Corbett, and I don't wish to speak about Richmond this afternoon, I have a really big problem in having Corbett elevated to the level of a universal thinker on sea power. I do not think he was that. I do not even think he was a strategist and I don't think that his so-called *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, published in 1911, will live forever. I do think that, as a historian who used archival material as the materials to shape his country's naval history, he will live a long time. Englishmen (I wouldn't use the word Anglo-Saxons) or Britons, maintaining an empire over four hundred years by an always growing intrepid navy, will interest people, in the connection between the State and the navy. This seems to me not to be a small matter. Therefore, I accept the idea of Corbett leveled as a chauvinist British thinker, and I'm quite content with him at that level.

Jon Sumida: Admiral Hill's remarks provoked a thought in response to James Goldrick's paper on *The Naval Review*. We have been looking on this question of the influence of *The Naval Review*, or of Corbett or Richmond on the navy, but there is a sense in which I think *The Naval Review*, in particular, perhaps even the approach of Corbett and Richmond to naval history, represents a bringing of the navy into line with changes in British society. I am thinking here of G.M. Young's remarks about the significance of the nineteenth century. I mean, what changed in Britain? G.M. Young summed it up; he may not have been correct, but his interesting comment is that what happened in England in the nineteenth century was "the emergence of disinterested intelligence." Perhaps you have been reading the work of Harold Perkin on the rise of professional society and professional discourse in England in the nineteenth century. I think when Richard Hill talked about the liberation that occurs with *The Naval Review*, it is something that happened in the naval culture which had happened, I think, in the larger culture, perhaps several years or decades before. We could look at this question of *The Naval Review* and the rise of a certain kind of naval history or naval analysis as a way of adapting the culture of the navy to the kind of industrialized society that had been created in Britain, not simply looking at this phenomenon in purely naval terms. I think that would be overly restricted.

Captain Sainsbury: This question of where liberation has been used is an interesting one. This, I warn you, will be something not so much a statement about the Navy Records Society, but a plug for it. There are no fewer than five or six people in this room today who are busy preparing the volume of documents (*British Naval Documents, 1204-1960*) to celebrate its centenary next year (June 1993). That is a plug; join now and qualify. It is interesting that both *The Naval Review* and *The Mariner's Mirror* started as a result of a desire to

communicate by correspondence. *The Mariner's Mirror*, the Journal of the Society for Nautical Research, was originally published monthly. It eased off during the First War; when it resumed in 1918, it was then a monthly publication and it generated a great deal of active correspondence, which is all evidence of this desire to communicate, to show experiences, exchange and trade ideas and opinions. I do not think that the Naval Society ever really got off the ground as a corresponding party, but it was overtaken too soon by the publication of *The Review*.

I do not know how many people know this, I confess perhaps I should have known better and am rash to admit it, but I only discovered in doing a little research into the first hundred years of the Navy Records Society that the Society for Nautical Research was a kind of, not exactly a splinter group, but an offspring of the Navy Records Society. There are those who, in the Society for Nautical Research today, speak affectionately but despairingly about stone anchors in the Mediterranean, as a kind of shorthand phrase. It was quite clear that the members of the Navy Records Society thought that the Nautical Researchers, the stone anchors in the Mediterranean, the restorers of the *Victory*, were not quite the kind of people that the Navy Records Society had been formed for. It was decided that, rather than forming an archeological or more modern historical branch of the NRS, the SNR should be encouraged, quite affectionately, but definitely, to form itself, cast itself off, and cut itself adrift. In fact, the SNR is an offspring of the NRS to a much greater extent than I, for one, had generally perceived.

There is another point which I found interesting about the conception of the Navy Records Society, and I must say it is extremely difficult with these three initials, NRS and SNR, always to be quite sure that one is talking about the right scheme. Don Schurman refers, in his admirable life of Corbett, to the Navy Records Society. He wrote, "Furthermore, the Navy Records Society had just been founded as a scholarly, but self-conscious reaction against foreign naval growth and challenge." Now, I'm not for a moment challenging him in the aggressive way, but I'm bound to say that, if pressed, we always say that the NRS exists to publish naval documents, usually in the English language, which would not otherwise have seen the light of day. I wondered whether you felt that the NRS had a kind of second growth which was not usually perceived or which we kept to ourselves?

Donald Schurman: The thing you are questioning is whether it was a scholarly but self-conscious reaction against foreign naval growth and challenge. I think that, in that period in British naval history, the period between 1889 through the Harding commission and when the two-power standard was created, was a time of very great uncertainty as far as the navy was concerned. Just at that time, they had the ships they could practice with and see how they might be used in

a future war. So I think the interest in that subject developed from that natural tendency, but I think there is more to it than that. The Navy Records Society was also a self-conscious response to people's desires to know what happened in the Elizabethan era. The Navy Records Society really began with *Drake and the Tudor Navy* and with the first volumes that Laughton published. In that sense, I think they were quite right. When I mention Corbett's own reaction to his publication experience, if he had tried to write *Drake in the Tudor Navy* in 1885–86, it would have fallen flat, in my opinion. People were ready for it in the next period and, therefore, there was a kind of response to that nature. Thirdly, I think it was part of the same kind of urge to publish, characterized by Virginia Woolf's father's production of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. I think Gardiner was publishing his history. *The Official Documents* with reference to the American Civil War were being published at the time. So, on all those levels, there was a push.

I think that sentence of mine was very badly worded, because I do not think it was chauvinist, in the sense the Navy Records Society was responding to Germany, France or anybody else in particular. The focus was not there, that might have been there later on, in say 1910.

Andrew Gordon: I was wondering if James Goldrick would care to relate his comment about the academically demanding, but not conceptual, nature of officers' education to the following assertion: this century has seen a progression of inventions which have been increasingly philosophical in origin and, for the first forty years of the century, more and more scientific advances have been made by philosophers with scientific training or scientists with philosophical ability and that the Royal Navy's officers' education being academically demanding, but not conceptual, handicapped it greatly in its weapons acquisitions abilities, because the group of trees of, let's say, science was growing up towards the cloud base of philosophy, where philosophical guidance would have been needed. The first and tallest tree to break the cloud base, I think, was the fire control problem. I believe that the Royal Navy's failure to adopt the Pollen fire control system, which Jon Sumida has worked on, was essentially a philosophical failure, not a technical one, because they had the mechanical ability and the mathematical knowledge. The philosophical failure was almost unavoidable, in view of the narrowness of their education.

James Goldrick: As David Brown was suggesting, the answer is "yes." If I may now expand; it is a problem we have not yet looked at as historians and I think we have to look at it. The failure of the Royal Navy in some ways, and its success in others, must be a relationship both to the educational system in its widest sense, and to the officers' structure which the Royal Navy has pursued. There is a requirement, I think, to investigate the successes and failures of the United

States Navy which has very different educational systems and completely different ideas of officers' structures. There is, for example, a recent book by Vice Admiral Sir Louis Le Bailey, *A Naval Engineer*, the first volume of his autobiography, which describes, at considerable length, some of the fundamental engineering failures of the Royal Navy which I think come indirectly from, not the lack of understanding, but the lack of interest on the part of the executive branch of the Royal Navy. On the other hand, it could be very strongly argued that some of the repeated professional failures of the United States Navy, in this century, result from too many engineers at the wrong spot. The Australian navy's answer, I might say, was British methods and American equipment. But both of these are problems we have yet to examine and I think they need to be examined. They are only just starting to become obvious with work like Jon Sumida's and with autobiographies like Sir Louis Le Bailey's. This is a present problem: how do you have educational systems and officers' structures which can deal with those sort of problems.

Roger Knight: Barry Hunt noted that a few ancient classics were preserved in the office of the Commandant at the Royal College of Defence Studies. It may be of interest that the RCDS copy of Corbett's *Principles of Maritime Strategy* survived in the library until 1989; it is now on my shelves.

After Dinner Speech Trend and Change

Rear-Admiral Guy F. Liardet, C.B., C.B.E., Royal Navy

It is a great honour to be asked to address this conference tonight. My credentials for being here are, I suppose, based upon my recent naval experience, but also rather more strongly on a historical connection. I come from a long line of army, navy and Royal Marine officers, and it was my great-great grand-uncle, Captain Francis Liardet who, as a midshipman, was one of the first to be wounded in the first engagement of the war of 1812 when the British frigate *Belvidera* was being chased by a powerful American squadron commanded by Commodore John Rodgers. A burst main-deck gun in the USS *President* and the expedient of throwing overboard one bower, one stream and two sheet anchors, the barge, the yawl, the jolly-boat and thirty-four tons of water enabled the *Belvidera* to escape to Halifax. Captain Liardet ended his days as captain of the then Naval Hospital at Greenwich (where I served my final appointment) and he died in 1863, recorded in our *Dictionary of National Biography* as “an ornament and a boast even to his own noble profession.”

There is, therefore, an element of the Liardet family getting its revenge here, so settle down in your seats and make yourselves comfortable.

Interestingly, two of his uncles fought at the battle of the Glorious First of June in 1794. Poor Midshipman Lionel, on board Lord Howe’s flagship, did not survive the experience, but his brother, Frederick Liardet, a Royal Marines major, distinguished himself in quite a different vein to his previous appearance in the Admiralty Courts-Martial return—incidentally on the same page as that of a certain Captain Bligh of the *Bounty* armed vessel and his mutineers—for the offence of quarrelling and unofficer-like conduct towards the purser of the *Ariel* sloop. How heartily those of us who have had dealings with naval administrators and paymasters must sympathize with Frederick!

My first strategic point emerges here—the end of the short-lived distraction of the Cold War means that the Royal Navy can now get back to its proper business—fighting the French! And I hope that after his remarks this afternoon Hervé will take this home to Paris as a proper and true expression of British foreign policy!

I am indebted for the above details to Captain Joe McCleary, United States Naval Attaché to the Court of St. James, who kindly gave me a copy of *The Naval War of 1812*, written by Theodore Roosevelt when he was a student of twenty-three, and which has been described as signalling the beginning of the transformation of the United States from a small, isolationist sea power to an international force with a navy large enough to defend its overseas empire. It is a work of finely ground scholarship, and it contains almost obsessive calculations and comparisons of gun battery throw-weights and crew sizes in each of the many single-ship engagements described.

My talk this evening is inspired by the paper delivered here by Captain Wayne P. Hughes, Jr., at the Mahan Centennial Conference, where, among some brilliant insights, he remarks:

If historians are going to help military men to fight in the future, then a search for constants, or principles as Mahan called them, is not enough; it is necessary, but not sufficient. To see from the last war to the next, however dimly, the key is the study of *trends*. In order to see trends one must grasp the sweep of history.¹

The thoughts that I offer you here this evening are fairly transparent. We stand now in the midst of an unprecedented cusp in technological and historical progress; I am not sure that the lessons of history apply any more. Francis Fukuyama said, in a Hegelian sort of a way, that history had come to an end and I am broadly aware of the echoes of that statement up and down the corridors. Today's newspapers would seem to deny him, but I believe that from the point of view of sea power as such, there has been a trend in the past and a catastrophic discontinuity in the present. I use "catastrophe" here in the technical sense, a very rapid change of state under stress.

This is how a simple and non-academic sailor sees it. For centuries, the sea has been a *tabula rasa*, a flat table, almost land-like in its characteristics as a field for manoeuvre. Extension of sea-control required the geographical extension of safe harbours for refitting and the establishment of coaling stations. Antigua, Simonstown, the Falklands, Trincomalee, Gibraltar spring to my mind. It was a methodical process requiring money and willpower. Persistent was the need to defeat the core of the enemy's strength at short range and in concentration. Theodore Roosevelt's obsessive calculations were *important*, they were battle-deciders, and the propagation of all the benefits of superiority—interdiction of trade, town-burning, amphibious operations, land campaign support, unfair tariff practices, blockade—followed with inevitable and simple logic. And in those days, such things had strategic leverage.

¹ Wayne P. Hughes, Jr., "Mahan, Tactics and Principles of Strategy," in Hattendorf, ed., *The Influence of History on Mahan* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1991), p. 34.

When reading the celebrated American historian Garrett Mattingly's account of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, I was struck by the following passage which occurs shortly after the appearance of the Armada off the Eddystone Rock in the English Channel on 31 July 1588: "a weight of ships beneath which the ocean seemed to groan. . . ."

There was cause enough for uncertainty. Fleets like this were a new thing in the world. Nobody had ever seen two such in combat. Nobody knew what the new weapons would do, or what tactics would make them most effective. This was the beginning of a new era in naval warfare, of the long day in which the ship of the line, wooden-walled, sail driven, and armed with smooth-bore cannon, was to be queen of battles; a day for which the armour-plated, steam-powered battleship with rifled cannon merely marked the evening so that antiquarians will probably lump the two together when they have thought of a name for the period which, until now, we have called 'modern.' In the beginning there was no name for the ship-of-the-line and no idea how to use it. That morning off the Eddystone nobody in either fleet knew how to fight a modern battle. Nobody in the world knew how.

There is not the time nor the space here to illustrate every aspect of this catastrophe, but let us look at the stationing of ships in battle as an expression of the trend and discontinuity that I referred to earlier. You will all recall that the Spanish Fleet sailed up-Channel in an unbreakable crescent formation, roughly four times its depth from wing to wing, and concave at the back. Those of us, and I am sure there are several here, who have been students of Allied Tactical Publication Number One (ATP-1), The Allied Naval Maneuvering Instructions, (I've always thought that the spelling of the word manoeuvring, "eu," is an expression of brutal American colonialism) will recognize the formation, perhaps more straightly drawn, in the convoy screening diagrams of the 1960s and 1970s. The hole in the back may have allowed Medina Sidonia's battlewagons to tack across to the threatened wing or the escort aircraft carrier to change round the combat air patrol, but the shape and principles remain the same. I imagine that in Nelson's day the officer of the deck would have been unpopular if he had strayed perhaps fifty feet out of the line-of-battle at crucial moments. At Jutland in the First World War, rude signals would have accompanied an error of, say, a cable from that position allocated by Grand Fleet Battle Orders. Escorts with the short-range high-frequency sonars of World War Two and subsequently, operating in bent-line antisubmarine screens, had to present an impermeable front. This rigor is inferred in one of the better known signals in naval history—I wonder who here will recognize it?

All ships this is Sunshine. Execute to follow. Discontinue refuelling. Fleet Course 180. Small Boys reorient screen.

Difficulties in obeying this order in a typhoon gave rise to the court-martial of Lieutenant Commander Steve Maryk, Commander Queeg's exec aboard the USS *Caine*, in which vessel the watch officers were probably used to a latitude of about half a mile. Some of us here present will recall the idiosyncrasies of screen reorientation by Methods RUM and COKE and the many near-collisions that ensued. With the advent of low-frequency medium-range sonars and more capable anti-air weapons systems, allocated screening boxes would be sized in the 1970s and 80s at perhaps twelve square miles. More recently, a towed array escort or a submarine operating passively might be allocated four thousand eight hundred square miles, and a patrol aircraft twenty or thirty thousand square miles. After four centuries, this is quite a jump.

What about the tactic of convoy? Admirals of the eighteenth century and escort force commanders in the twentieth found it efficacious, because of certain mathematical ratios—that of area versus defendable circumference: privateer or submarine submerged speed versus convoy speed; enemy search-capability versus the area of ocean to be searched, within which a convoy becomes an evasive blob rather than a predictable lane of merchant traffic. For the first time in centuries, all these simple ratios are upset by the nuclear submarine and satellite and electronic warfare surveillance. What was a tactical *sine qua non* now requires re-gaming. Admiral Rodney in 1780 and the celebrated submarine-killer of the Battle of the Atlantic, Captain Walker, RN, operated at the same speeds and against the same weapons system ranges—about 1,500 yards. Now, we see virtually undetectable thirty-knot privateers with 200-mile-range missiles. The escorts in my squadron were capable of detecting submarines at only three or four times the usual World War Two range—at about five miles—in their year of launch, but by the mid-80s and with re-equipment, several had made detections at over 150 miles.

Other famous communications from the era of sail: “England Expects” and “I have only begun to fight” had an information data-rate little different from that of hand-keyed wireless at Jutland. All of a sudden, the imagination cannot comprehend the volume and velocity of the megabytes of information that today reach a Task Force by satellite links. Why, it even draws maps on screens, showing ships and aircraft on a worldwide basis in five primary colors. This really has altered the nature of sea power. The British Empire largely fell into the hands of entrepreneurial military men by accident, in the absence of directives. Nowadays, the sea commander is diminished to the role of force weapons system manager, with all the politics developed in real time at headquarters, be it White House or Whitehall. Rules of engagement rule, OK, as they say in the Pop world.

Getting a little nearer to the work of Richmond and Corbett, what about systematic operational analysis? Staff rides and what-if thinking had become commonplace among the Prussian military under the first von Moltke by about 1870. Nelson used to discuss tactics systematically with his Captains, and we

have heard much today about the first green shoots of higher thought in naval matters. In his book, *The King's Ships Were At Sea*, the twenty-three year old James Goldrick, now of the War College faculty and soon to be Prime Minister of Australia, draws attention to an important letter dispatched by Admiral Jellicoe to the Admiralty on 30 October 1914. This explains how he might have to act should the German battle fleet operate in an integrated manner with its submarines and, given the information available at the time, it appears reasonable. But it did not say, "I have verified these conclusions on the tactical floor at the Scapa Flow Tactical School with my fleet and subordinate staffs and we agree, etc., etc.," because neither the equipment nor the culture was in place. Perhaps if it had been, integrated ASW might not be as difficult as it still is! There has been a recent revolution in the use of analytical techniques to model business and military problems and in the use of computers to model weapon systems effectiveness, the objective establishment of management information systems, as well as a climate which encourages their critical review.

How does all this relate to geography and politics, the essential ground of sea power? In today's homogenized world, the absence of strategic frontiers of interest produces a corollary which says that we will nevermore see events of the scope of the MacArthur–Nimitz campaign in the Pacific, a campaign which future historians will see as perhaps the most ingenious and successful in history. Strategy is in decline, the level of the operational art may not be seen again, tactics yet may live.

To sum up so far, then, we have recently and paradoxically managed to equip the naval force commander with unprecedented wide-area surveillance and attack capabilities allied to unprecedented mobility, just in time to see his autonomy and political usefulness fall to an all-time low.

"Lack of autonomy," I think, we can all handle. Naval people are public servants and, in any case, there is always a need for the technician's input. "Falling political usefulness" is harder to swallow, but must be faced up to. We are peering into a glass darkly here, but organized violence as a method of settling the differences between states does seem to have had rather little success over the last century or so, if one compares war aims with their eventual achievements. I simply have to try and believe that the human race, confronted with the contemporary global problems, is beginning to learn that lesson, perhaps further conditioned by the recent nuclear dimension. That is the over-arching thought beneath which what has recently happened favours air forces and some types of armies, but navies less so.

Consider trade, which is so international now that the traditional shot across the bow might incur the wrath of three or four nations, two or three insurance markets, and both Toyota *and* General Motors, all of whom own bits of the vessel, its cargo, its crew and its reinsurance. Here is a curiosity which is unscripted. Last Friday I was in the conference room of the association where I

work, talking to a chap called David Green, a main board member of Hoechst Aktiengesellschaft, one of the large international chemical companies. He said to me “do you know that my wife’s brother is called Alfred Thayer Mahan?” The conversation had gone over what I was about to do in the next few days and so forth and so forth. I said “No I didn’t know that.” He said “Well, did you know his grandfather was the Alfred Thayer Mahan as well?” Isn’t that a rather extraordinary coincidence? Don’t you agree? It is a small world bound by commercial ties is my thesis. There is now a *de facto* freedom of the seas assured by commercial interest. Turnover in foreign exchange is now nine hundred billion dollars a day. As with the military numbers that I have quoted above, the cusp is also evident in the last decade of worldwide, cross-border transactions in equities which have grown at a compound rate of 28 percent a year, from 120 billion dollars to 1.4 trillion. The stock of international bank lending has risen from 4 percent of the OECD’s GDP in 1980 to 44 percent in 1991, or from 324 billion dollars to 7.5 trillion. These are powerful incentives to contain whatever little spots of bother may eventuate around the Kuriles, the Spratlys, the Paracels, the Tunbs or Abu Musa. Ten dollars to anybody who can pinpoint those on the map.

Further inland, the many tragic territorial and ethnic conflicts that have succeeded communist hegemony seem likely to be ignored by the OECD, the G7, and Western nations, and allowed bloodily to work themselves out. Or perhaps not so much ignored as recognised as being impervious to coercion or dissuasion. Interest will heighten should weapons of mass destruction be threatened. Navies have modest uses in such scenarios. They can produce air cover over Sarajevo or a fairly peripheral right flank against Iraq, and they can ensure the safe arrival of heavyweights, like tanks, at desired destinations within reasonable time-scales.

But, returning to my technological theme, at what cost? We should not underrate the technological span of these “Third World” conflicts—anyone can buy a Flanker with a laser guided missile these days—but sustained effectiveness does depend on logistical reach, intelligence and surveillance, complex training facilities, AEW, JSTARS, and an integrated, all-arms approach. These things are beyond the capacity of small nations. To what extent will these expensive capabilities be preservable amongst richer nations who may not wish to act as a world policeman, but to alter their spending profiles towards more immediate programs: social programs such as the education of women in the lesser developed countries in the interests of population control, narcotics interdiction, arms reduction and neutralization, environmental and fishery protection, piracy and immigration control. All are activities which tend towards conflict prevention rather than execution. What level of defence, say, would the United Kingdom need to fend off a seaborne attack by Serbia?

Flexibility will not be enough to justify the cost of a carrier battle group without demonstrating, by close scenario-based analysis, that there will not be near-to land-based airfields adequate to provide the cover needed for whatever operations are postulated, given their relative efficiencies. Nor, for example, will the attack nuclear submarine be seen to be automatically justified by increasingly green taxpayers worried about accidents and reactor disposal. Used only once since their invention, very expensive and environmentally unsound, they seem an easily managed and ripe target for universal arms reduction which will allow, incidentally, better invulnerability for the SSBN, which itself still appears to have a future as the banker of last resort in a crumbling nuclear deterrence arcana.

What about our vital interests? Security has been guaranteed by the Nato Alliance for forty years, but I am sure that I am not alone in having some worries about the credibility of its strategy in the last ten: the insoluble warning time versus reinforcement time diathesis, the difficulty of creating scenarios for the Wintex/Hilex series which would convincingly explain how armored thrusts across the German plain or down that single frozen Norwegian road would benefit anybody, or the more recent problems concerning the Follow-On Forces Attack concept and which Germans would end up dead as a result. In 1588, you will recall, nobody knew how to fight a modern battle. I never really rationalized it out myself when I was a participant, but with hindsight, were those hugely complex and ambitious transatlantic exercises in the United Effort/Ocean Safari series really rooted in war-fighting reality? Clearly, they had a role in political reassurance in peacetime, especially for northern flank Nato members. Here is a curious question to which I really seek an answer—to what extent did the Soviet submarine force *actually* practice antishipping manoeuvres? They always seemed to be training for the anti-carrier role in my experience. After the collapse of the ideologies, what incentives will a prosperous Russia in thirty or forty years time have to ruin it all? But one does see a common and vital interest in Persian Gulf oil as the residual exploitable source of hydrocarbons converges on that area. One notices Iran flexing its muscles, buying arms and preparing to fill post-Saddam vacuums. The purchase of three Kilo-class diesel electric submarines might sound modest, except to those who have tried active sonar searches in Arabian Sea thermo-structures. A bit of deterrent investment in this part of the Middle East is obviously wise, but not necessarily naval.

The ghost of the Nato Alliance, whose wars have all been internal—Turkey versus Greece, the United Kingdom versus Iceland—but whose tactical doctrine and procedures have only been used in anger outside the Nato area, *may* translate into some sort of supranational United Nations peacekeeping body requiring hi-tech sea power, but the history of alliances and the other omens are not supportive.

This has been a highly compressed ramble around the subject and here is the juncture where I am obliged to say that these are my personal opinions and not

those of any think-tank or ministry of defence. I hope that I have shown that navies have until recently been subject to evolutionary and containable trends, wherein the principles of war have generally held good and historical extrapolations have been useful, even through the arrivals of the mine, the aircraft and the submarine. Within the last couple of decades, catastrophic change in so many of the constants, or principles, both strategic and technical, has drawn a line under the past. Richmond and Corbett would have revelled in today's climate. They would have had a blank sheet upon which to draw and much better drawing instruments. One of these instruments is of course the United States Naval War College, which contributed so significantly to Admiral Nimitz' thinking and which will no doubt contribute to a happier twenty-first century.

The Historian as Contemporary Analyst Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir John Fisher

Jon Tetsuro Sumida

Julian Stafford Corbett established his reputation as Britain's leading naval historian by writing books about sea warfare in the age of sail. He was also keenly interested in the naval problems of his own day. A confidant of Admiral Sir John Fisher, service chief of the Royal Navy from 1904 to 1910, Corbett wrote articles and memoranda in support of Admiralty policy. His literary efforts on behalf of Fisher's controversial initiatives influenced favorably the views of both the public and officialdom, and thus contributed significantly to the prosperity of naval reform. "Assisting Fisher in the Dreadnought Age," wrote Donald M. Schurman, Corbett's biographer, was "his greatest non-historical activity."¹ Corbett possessed the powers of argument of a trained barrister, the analytical skills of an experienced historian, intellectual integrity, and access—because of his connection with Fisher—to classified information. His pieces on contemporary naval subjects, therefore, were more than partisan exercises. Corbett was in fact an early practitioner of serious naval analysis. In particular, his commentaries on capital ship design, the central policy question of his time, were substantial and provocative.

Corbett's writing on this issue, however, has gone largely unstudied for two reasons. In the first place, Fisher's position on the *Dreadnought*, the new model battleship introduced at the beginning of his tenure as First Sea Lord, was seriously misrepresented by what have been regarded as authoritative histories.² This made it impossible for those reading Corbett after the fact and without knowledge of confidential materials to see that a close relationship existed between his consideration of the form and functions of battleships and cruisers, and serious debate about the same within the Admiralty. Corbett's discourses on warship types thus appeared to be either obvious or detached when in fact neither was the case. In the second place, Corbett had also written significantly on the organization of a naval staff, the proper form of naval education, the vulnerability of Britain to invasion, and the

¹ Donald M. Schurman, *Julian S. Corbett, 1854–1922: Historian of British Maritime Policy from Drake to Jellicoe* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1981), p. 197.

² Charles Fairbanks, Jr., "The Origins of the Dreadnought Revolution: A Historiographical Essay," *The International History Review*, 13 (May 1991), pp. 246–72.

theory of naval war. The attraction of scholars to these worthy matters was not unjustified, but their preoccupation with them has worked to the serious disadvantage of our understanding of Corbett's activity as an analyst of important technical questions.

This paper will depart from previous studies of Corbett's influence upon Fisher³ by examining his policy analysis as a category distinct from his works of pure history or strategic theory. To this end, it will present Corbett's views on the problem of capital ship characteristics as they were expressed in his introduction to the Admiralty's war plans, articles in the general and service press, confidential memoranda to the senior leadership of the navy and members of the cabinet, and one chapter of *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. It will explain the connection that existed between Corbett's writing and Fisher's technological radicalism. It will evaluate Corbett's strengths and weaknesses as a naval analyst, and the power and limitations of historical perspective with respect to British decision making during the *Dreadnought* era. And it will attempt briefly to relate the Corbett-Fisher story to naval concerns of our own time.

* * *

Corbett's first major historical works, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, published in 1898, and *The Successors of Drake*, published in 1900, were notable among other things for the prominence given to warship design, gunnery, and tactics, and their relationship to each other and to strategy. The success of the English in battles at sea, he wrote, was in large part attributable to their introduction of a new form of warship—the fast and maneuverable sailing vessel that was heavily armed with artillery but whose low slung hull made it vulnerable to boarding. Speed and nimble handling, according to Corbett, made it possible for English fighting ships to keep their distance from opponents, and thus avoid the boarding contests in which they were at a disadvantage, while their superiority in fire power enabled them to inflict great harm upon their enemies from afar. The construction of such ships, Corbett suggested, was prompted by the belief that their qualitative superiority would allow the crown to build and maintain a more capable navy at lower cost.⁴ As will be seen, England's approach to naval warfare during the reign of Elizabeth, as described by Corbett, bore a striking resemblance to that espoused by Fisher in the early twentieth century.

³ Peter Marsh Stanford, "The Work of Sir Julian Corbett in the Dreadnought Era," United States Naval Institute *Proceedings*, 77, January 1951, pp. 60–71; Donald M. Schurman, *The Education of a Navy: The Development of British Naval Strategic Thought, 1867–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); *idem.*, "An Historian and the Sublime Aspects of the Naval Profession," in A. M. J. Hyatt, ed., *Dreadnought to Polaris: Maritime Strategy since Mahan* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1973); and *idem.*, *Corbett*.

⁴ Julian Stafford Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy with a History of the Rise of England as a Maritime Power*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898), pp. 363–409, and *The Successors of Drake* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900), pp. 416–38.

Corbett first wrote in public support of Fisher's proposals for naval reform while the latter was Second Sea Lord in 1902. The historian and admiral appear to have begun meeting and corresponding in 1903. During the next two years, Fisher provided Corbett with papers explaining his ideas on naval policy and other confidential documents. These included Fisher's notes to lectures that he had given while in command of the Mediterranean Fleet from 1899 to 1902.⁵ In this printed collection, Fisher had observed that the torpedo threat had made close action impossible, that a superiority in speed was required to enable British warships to keep the range long where the torpedo was not a threat, and that fighting at such distances would make accurate long-range gunnery essential. Armored cruisers, Fisher also argued, should be as large as battleships and "the Armored Cruiser of the first-class is a swift Battleship in disguise."⁶ Corbett was troubled by what he regarded as Fisher's overemphasis of matériel,⁷ but in light of what the historian was to write not long afterwards, it is probably safe to say that the remarks about the armored cruiser were received with interest.

Fisher's becoming First Sea Lord in October 1904 gave him the opportunity to put his ideas about the armored cruiser into practice. At his request, a committee of civilian technical experts and naval officers was charged with the task of considering the question of warship design; the committee met in early 1905. By this time, Fisher was prepared to abandon the battleship altogether in favor of a new model armored cruiser that was less well protected but very much faster and more heavily armed than existing battleships. The committee rejected this proposal, however, and by way of a compromise approved the construction of a fast battleship as well as three super armored cruisers. The building of the battleship, named *Dreadnought*, was expedited in order to test at the earliest possible date the practicability of her novel systems of armament and propulsion, and she was commissioned in 1906, eighteen months in advance of the armored cruisers. The radical features of the vessels ordered under the 1905–06 estimates provoked a storm of controversy, reinforcing an already strong opposition to Fisher's reforms of education and administration, and general leadership.⁸

Fisher again called for the replacement of the battleship by what amounted to a large armored cruiser in a secret report printed in November 1905, a copy of which was sent to Corbett.⁹ Corbett first wrote on the armored cruiser

⁵ Schurman, *Corbett*, p. 36.

⁶ Churchill College, Cambridge. Fisher Papers, FISR 8/1, F.P. 4702: "Extracts from Confidential Papers. Mediterranean Fleet, 1899–1902," 15 October 1902, pp. 3, 10–11, 75.

⁷ Schurman, *Corbett*, p. 36.

⁸ Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy: Finance, Technology and British Naval Policy, 1889–1914* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 51–61.

⁹ "The Strategic Aspect of Our Building Programme," in "Report of Navy Estimates Committee: November 16, 1905," January 1906, pp. 13–15, in Churchill College, Cambridge. FISR 8/6, F.P. 4709 and also in Ministry of Defence Library, London. I am indebted to Dr. Nicholas Lambert for the information regarding Corbett's receipt of this print.

question in the introduction to the war plans drafted during late 1906 and early 1907 by a secret committee at the War College at Portsmouth. The main text, which was based on studies and primitive war games carried out several years before, did not take into account recent lessons of the Russo-Japanese War or the advent of the faster and more powerfully armed battleships and armored cruisers recommended by Fisher's warship design committee of 1905. Historians have rightly dismissed the effort as having no practical significance, amounting to little more than a sop to critics of the Admiralty's lack of war plans.¹⁰ Corbett's lengthy opening remarks, on the other hand, represented a serious attempt to grapple with issues raised by the introduction of the *Dreadnought* and the impending completion of her armored cruiser stablemates, the three units of the *Invincible* class.

Corbett had no trouble justifying the *Dreadnought*, whose protection was equal, and fire power and speed superior, to that of any other battleship. "It would, indeed, be hard to find in history," he observed, "another case where the pure theory of the art of war has been so correctly and convincingly translated into materiel."¹¹ The case of the *Invincibles* was another matter. "Of all naval problems," Corbett wrote, "that of the cruiser is by far the most difficult and uncertain."¹² He noted that the issue insofar as the large armored cruiser was concerned was fundamentally a matter of resources: high-speed armored cruisers with heavy caliber main armaments were as costly as battleships, and as a consequence their construction was bound to reduce the number of battleships available to the battle fleet. Yet Corbett also recognized that swift units with the power of battleships would on occasion be required to stiffen the cruisers on blockade duty. He squared the circle by arguing that heavily gunned vessels of the *Invincible* type were not only desirable as supports for weaker cruisers acting along enemy overseas lines of communication, but were capable of greatly enhancing the capability of the British battle fleet.

Corbett defended this proposition on historically counterfactual grounds. Britain's overwhelming naval superiority in the age of sail, he noted, meant that British fleets usually had been in the position of trying to impose a decisive action upon an inferior force in retreat, and there was every reason to believe that such would be the conditions of any naval war of the foreseeable future. A battle fleet augmented by a fast and powerful squadron, Corbett wrote, would have the ability

to reach out and grasp a flying enemy by the tail, and hold him till it has time to get him firmly in its grip. For this purpose, no ship was ever devised so deadly as the "Invincibles." That as supporting ships they are unnecessarily powerful and costly may be admitted. But this defect is nothing when weighed against the gain. . . . In reality they are the expression of the most cherished and distinctive aspiration of our greatest masters

¹⁰ Lt.-Cmdr. P. K. Kemp, ed., *The Papers of Admiral Sir John Fisher*, 2 vols (London: Navy Records Society, 1960-64), ii, pp. 316-17, and Schurman, *Corbett*, pp. 66-69.

¹¹ Kemp, *Fisher Papers*, ii, p. 327.

¹² *Ibid.*, ii, p. 333.

of the art, to which no adequate expression was ever given before. It is the very type that all the old men from Hawke to Nelson sighed for, but never obtained. The conception is rooted in the highest and oldest traditions of our methods of warfare, and in the fundamental conditions of our naval preponderance.¹³

Corbett had strong reservations, however, about Fisher's goal of replacing battleships, including those like the *Dreadnought*, with large armored cruisers. He thus warned against the *Invincibles* asserting themselves as "the sole type of battleship," which "whether correct or not in the future, would be to overstep the limits within which at present their existence is justifiable."¹⁴ He was also opposed to Fisher's contention that large armored cruisers would be able to carry out the functions of smaller cruisers and thus make them unnecessary. "The theory of naval war," Corbett insisted, "so far as we are yet able to penetrate it, no less than the practice of the great masters, still demands ordinary cruisers in considerable numbers for the primary function of controlling the maritime lines of passage and communication."¹⁵ Corbett's expression of his opinions about the *Invincibles*, even when qualified with the prospect of a change of view if future circumstances warranted, courted Fisher's displeasure. But within weeks of the completion of the war plans, Corbett published an article in defence of Admiralty policy that would give him a substantial claim on the gratitude of the First Sea Lord.

Corbett's piece was entitled "Recent Attacks on the Admiralty," and appeared in the February 1907 edition of the monthly *The Nineteenth Century*.¹⁶ The first half was devoted to the admonition of Fisher's critics in general terms, the second to the refutation of specific charges that had been made against the Admiralty's warship design policy. Most of the second section was given over to a discussion of the large armored cruiser, which was intended as a reply to an article by Admiral Sir Reginald Custance (writing anonymously) on the historical development of cruisers that had been published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in January.¹⁷ Custance had argued that the historical record from the sixteenth century through the nineteenth proved that a strong distinction should be made between battleships and cruisers, that intermediate types such as the *Invincibles* were unsound, and that large numbers of small and relatively inexpensive cruisers were essential in wartime.

Corbett conceded that Custance had carried out his historical inquiry "in a most able and exhaustive manner" but then asked "whether the whole of this history is not out of court." "A naval historian," he explained,

¹³ *Ibid.*, ii, pp. 326–27.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* ii, p. 327.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ An earlier version of this article was circulated as a secret Admiralty print, for which see "Recent Admiralty Administration," January 1907, Ministry of Defence Library, London, Crease Papers, Crease Mss Box 3. Courtesy of Dr. Nicholas Lambert.

¹⁷ "The Growth of the Cruiser," *Blackwood's Magazine*, 180 (January 1907), pp. 21–35.

is the last person in the world to belittle the value of naval history in clearing questions of to-day, but he cannot deny how misleading history may be if we look for guidance on the surface instead of seeking the underlying conditions which give that surface its conformation. The value of history is not only to set forth the experience of the past, but also to show when some radical change of fundamental conditions has made that experience dangerous precedent.¹⁸

Corbett went on to observe that in the age of sail, warships of the largest size were slower and less maneuverable than fighting vessels of middling dimensions, and that cruisers were capable of catching even the fastest merchant vessels; in the age of steam, on the other hand, size conferred speed with little or no sacrifice of maneuverability, which meant that fast battleships could run down, and large liners outrun, small cruisers. Large unarmored cruisers, Corbett reasoned had little fighting value, and he thus favored the construction of large armored cruisers, although admitting that there was a case to be made for “some smaller type of fleet cruiser” to “fill the gap” between destroyers and the *Invincibles*.¹⁹

In an earlier article,²⁰ Custance had maintained that the history of the development of the capital ship had demonstrated that increases in size resulted in no ultimate advantage because opponents could respond with commensurate increases of their own, leaving the relative position of the two sides unchanged. Corbett countered that the game of meeting improvement in enemy matériel with further improvement according to the “law of inequality” or “over-trumping” was a long-standing—that is to say, historical—fact of life, and that in the case of the *Dreadnought*—and implicitly the *Invincibles*—the results had never been “more disturbing to our neighbours, or more comfortable for ourselves.” “The card has been well and boldly played, but none the less,” he insisted,

it is certain the old law was forcing the hands that played it. Whether we are conscious of it or not, it is a law of unyielding power—no more to be resisted by our present Board than it was by the great naval first lords of the eighteenth century. No matter how the Exchequer may complain, the law will go on working like the tide till a point is reached when it is proved beyond a shadow of doubt that increase of size no longer increases fighting value, or till some consideration of material [*sic*] bars further growth.²¹

Corbett concluded his discussion of battleship design with a paragraph on naval gunnery and tactics whose assessments in favor of the *Dreadnought* were also equally applicable to the large armored cruisers.²² Insofar as his remarks on gunnery were concerned, he made clear that they were based on knowledge of

¹⁸ Julian Stafford Corbett, “Recent Attacks on the Admiralty,” *The Nineteenth Century*, 61 (February 1907), p. 203.

¹⁹ Corbett, “Recent Attacks,” pp. 204–5.

²⁰ “The Growth of the Capital Ship,” *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 179 (May 1906), pp. 577–96.

²¹ Corbett, “Recent Attacks,” p. 206.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 206–07.

classified information that represented a consensus of the “practical men”—that is, those officers that were directly responsible for current gunnery policy.²³

Before moving on, two points raised by Corbett in his article with regard to the general issue of the relationship between historical analysis and the discussion of contemporary policy are worthy of note. In the first place, Corbett denigrated the value of history learned “merely from text-books” in comparison with history acquired from the long study of “confidential state papers” and buttressed by extended direct observation of the secret policy deliberations of those in power.²⁴ In the second place, Corbett cited the misuse of history on the part of the Admiralty’s critics as justifiable grounds for his intervention as a professional historian in the public controversy over naval policy. Opponents of Fisher, he argued had looked

back to history to trace the true direction of naval development out of the past, to project it into the future, and so to argue that our present policy is not proceeding on the right line. To history they have appealed, and by history let them be judged.²⁵

Corbett, aware perhaps of the dangers of pressing the claims of historical expertise too far, spoke with greater reservation on “The Strategical Value of Speed in Battle-ships” to the Royal United Service Institution in the first week of March 1907. He began by disclaiming the idea even of attempting any dogmatic conclusion on the subject,²⁶ and narrowed his concern to the question of which was preferable from the standpoint of strategy, endurance, or speed. Corbett thus avoided the more difficult and arguably central issue of the degree to which armament and protection should be sacrificed for larger engines, which had already been dealt with the previous year by Captain Edmond J. W. Slade, a close friend, in a lecture at the War College at Portsmouth.²⁷ He nonetheless had ample opportunity once again to take Custance to task for claims that Fisher’s policy of building large warships such as the *Dreadnought* and the *Invincibles*—

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

²⁶ Julian Stafford Corbett, “The Strategical Value of Speed in Battle-ships,” *Royal United Service Institution, Journal*, 51 (March 1907), p. 824.

²⁷ Captain E. J. W. Slade, “Speed in Battleships,” 31 May 1906, in “H. M. Ships ‘Dreadnought’ and ‘Invincible.’ Memorandum,” June 1906, Churchill College, Cambridge. Fisher Papers, FISR 8/8, F.P. 4718. For Corbett’s relationship with Slade, see Schurman, *Corbett*, p. 24. Corbett was probably also responding *en passant* to the following: Lieutenant B. E. Domville, “Gold Medal Prize Essay, 1906; Subject: ‘What is the relative value of speed and armament, both strategically and tactically, in a modern battle-ship, and how far should either be sacrificed to the other in the ideal ship?’” *The Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 50 (1906), pp. 385–413, and Black Joke, “Tactical Speed,” *The United Service Magazine*, 34 (October 1906), pp. 1–15. See also “The Problem of Speed—Both Sides of the Question,” in John Leyland and T. A. Brassey, eds., *The Naval Annual, 1906* (Portsmouth: J. Griffin, 1906), pp. 144–55.

which was done in large part to obtain high speed—was tantamount to the repudiation of “the experience of generations of seamen.”²⁸

Corbett attacked Custance’s claim that medium-sized capital ships had the sanction of prescription by way of counter-example. He noted that in the early nineteenth century, Admiral Sir Thomas Hardy, Nelson’s Flag Captain and later a highly respected First Sea Lord, “laid it down as his guiding principle that it was powerful ships of the line which carried everything in a general action, and that it was large frigates which disposed of the smaller craft.” “I do not say that that proves everything for us now,” Corbett went on, “but it does prove that we ought to be very careful how we talk about the traditions of the service without having studied what the tradition of the service was throughout the whole period of which we are speaking.”²⁹ On the more specific point of speed, Corbett spoke unequivocally: “the tradition of the service has undoubtedly been . . . ever since Elizabethan days, towards getting the utmost possible speed in battle-ships, and great sacrifices of fighting strength have constantly been made for it.”³⁰ He concluded with the lesson that “we cannot possibly maintain the defensive ourselves, or break the defensive, if the enemy adopts it against us, without superior speed.”³¹

Corbett’s essay and speech, particularly the former, had a strong influence on opinion in favor of the Admiralty. Fisher rejoiced in its effects and undoubtedly would have welcomed additional such products, but Corbett, perhaps wisely, was never again to write for the public press in so overtly partisan tones.³² In March 1908, however, Fisher asked the historian to assist Commander Frederic C. Dreyer of the Ordnance Department in the drafting of a confidential memorandum for senior naval officers that supported his plan to increase the caliber of the main armament of future British battleships and large armored cruisers. This request was accompanied by a confidential print on the armament of battleships that contained technical information that favored the mounting of guns of the largest size.³³ Not long afterwards, Corbett and Dreyer co-authored what was ostensibly a more general defence

²⁸ Corbett, “Strategical Value of Speed,” p. 827. Corbett was responding to remarks made by Custance in his “The Growth of the Capital Ship,” *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 179 (May 1906), p. 595.

²⁹ Corbett, “Strategical Value of Speed,” p. 828.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 829.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 833.

³² Schurman, *Corbett*, p. 70. For a stinging and by no means ineffective historical reply to Corbett’s reference to Hardy, see Black Joke, “Some Criticisms” *The United Service Magazine*, 36 (October 1908), pp. 6–16.

³³ A print on armament was sent to Corbett by Fisher on 9 March 1908—probably the document in Churchill College, Cambridge. Fisher Papers, FISR 8/8, F.P. 4718: “Paper Prepared by Controller, “Comparison of Various Guns for Secondary Armament of Battleships,” in “H.M. Ships ‘Dreadnought’ and ‘Invincible’: Memorandum,” June 1906,—for which see National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Richmond Papers, RIC 9/1: Fisher’s secretary [Charles Walker?] to Corbett, 9 March 1908.

of the all-big-gun type capital ship for the benefit of members of the cabinet, which appeared in June.³⁴

Fisher seems to have warned Dreyer at the start “that he must conform to [Corbett’s] views.”³⁵ In any case, Corbett’s main contribution, apart from determining the general arrangement of argument and style, was apparently to provide effective historical reply to the kind of objections that were likely to be raised by Custance.³⁶ In the paper on increasing gun-caliber, Corbett observed that Admiralty critics would “urge that it would be impolitic for us to increase the burden of armaments by increasing the size of guns and ships, since other countries are sure to follow our example, and, in the end, we shall remain with no advantage.” Weighty and widely held as this view is, he countered

it is submitted it will not bear examination. If adopted it would mean that we deliberately surrendered the initiative to our rivals. In peace strategy the initiative is probably as important as in war. So long as we retain the initiative we keep our rivals in a chronic state of unreadiness, confuse their building policy, and by maintaining a perpetual superiority in each individual unit tend to preserve peace by post-poning the moment when they can make war at an advantage. In the latter part of the eighteenth century we surrendered this initiative in construction to France, and in the early part of the [nineteenth] to America, and the results were such as should deter us repeating the error.³⁷

In the second paper, Corbett dealt with historically based objections to long-range firing and the contention that concentration of fire could be attained by combining the armaments of several ships on one target as in the eighteenth century. To those who had argued that Nelson had “always desired to be laid alongside the enemy,” he answered that “Nelson and the whole English school preferred short range because it was at short range that our national system of gunnery and our superior skill in maneuvering could develop the highest intensity of effect.” In the present, Corbett went on, the Royal Navy was “ahead of our rivals” in methods of long-range fire control and that to close or “to

³⁴ Schurman, *Corbett*, p. 72. The account given here differs somewhat from that given by Schurman based on the dates given in the original documents, which are cited below. The first paper was begun on 14 March, and completed on 18 March. The second memorandum appears to have been a cabinet paper, although it is not listed in Great Britain, Public Record Office, *List of Cabinet Papers 1880–1914* (London: HMSO, 1964).

³⁵ Churchill College, Cambridge. Fisher Papers, FISR 1/6, F.P. 296: Fisher to Corbett, 10 March 1908.

³⁶ Schurman, *Corbett*, p. 72. The magnitude of Corbett’s contribution with regard to the framing of arguments and use of language may be gauged by comparing the documents in question to Dreyer’s clumsy writing in Great Britain, Admiralty, Gunnery Branch [Commanders Frederic C. Dreyer and C. V. Osborne], *Pollen Aim Corrector System Part I. Technical History and Technical Comparison with Commander F. C. Dreyer’s Fire Control System*, May 1913, in the Ministry of Defence Library, London, and Admiral Sir Frederic C. Dreyer, *The Sea Heritage: A Study of Maritime Warfare* (London: Museum Press, 1955).

³⁷ Churchill College, Cambridge. Dreyer Papers, DRYR 2/1: “A Discussion of the Relative Merits of the 13.5-inch and the 12-inch gun as the Armament for Battleships,” [18 March 1908], p. 3.

allow our enemy to close on us” was to “bring upon ourselves that leveller of strength, the torpedo menace, and we throw away all our undoubted superiority in gunnery.”³⁸ On the matter of concentration of fire, Corbett wrote that

the “Dreadnought” type is, in fact, the expression of the very old idea that the most economical tactical concentration is to be sought in massing the highest attainable gun energy in the fewest possible units. If this was true of the old days of close action, still more is it true of modern warfare. Owing to considerations of fire control the limits of effective concentration by more than one ship firing on the same enemy are nowadays out of all proportion more restricted than in old times. The more indeed the subject is studied the less does there seem to be hope of securing tactical advantage by the old plan of concentrating the fire of units. Concentration without waste of energy is nowhere to be found except by concentrating intensity of fire in units.³⁹

Two propositions contained in the excerpts just quoted were especially significant: first, that the policy of the Admiralty was to retain the initiative in peace by continuously introducing new model warships that were technologically superior to those of other nations, and second, that the gunnery of the Royal Navy was presumed to be in advance of all others, justifying in part the construction of capital ships that were best suited to fight a long-range action. Elsewhere Corbett’s memorandum stated that the Royal Navy’s methods of fire control “undoubtedly will improve;”⁴⁰ that it was “of the utmost importance to strike the first blow, to be able first to commence sustained hitting, in short, to be able to hit before the enemy can do so”;⁴¹ and finally, that high speed was “necessary” to ensure keeping the desired range, and therefore to develop fully the superiority” of long-range gunnery.⁴²

The extent to which these remarks represented Corbett’s views exactly is difficult to determine. He was writing to order, in the company of another who was a highly regarded expert on the technical material, and anonymously. On the other hand, there is no question that the arguments put forward with respect to the importance of obtaining superiorities in both speed and long-range firepower were those held by Fisher, and that the First Sea Lord also believed that these characteristics could not be gained in a capital ship that Britain could afford without sacrificing armor, which would amount to the building of large armored cruisers in the place of

³⁸ Churchill College, Cambridge. Fisher Papers, FISR 8/31, F.P. 4881: “The One Calibre Big Gun Armament for Ships” (June 1908), p. 39.

³⁹ “One Calibre Big Gun Armament,” p. 47. This section was probably based on Great Britain, Admiralty, Gunnery Branch, “Concentration of Fire Experiment: Extracts from Reports of the Firing at H.M.S. ‘Landrail,’ Carried out at Portland, 4th October 1906,” January 1907. Ministry of Defence Library, London. P[amphlet]. 1015.

⁴⁰ “One Calibre Big Gun Armament,” p. 38.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

battleships.⁴³ Corbett was well aware of Fisher's predilection for the large armored cruiser. He probably knew of the attack on the large armored cruiser concept just published in that year's *Naval Annual*,⁴⁴ and recognized that his memorandum was something more than a simple justification of the all-big-gun principle. And he was intelligent enough to see that the practicability of Fisher's radical vision depended to a great extent upon the question of fire control, which had figured prominently in his memorandum.

Given a speed advantage that could be used to keep the range long, a superiority in fire control would in theory enable British large armored cruisers to hit their opponents before they could be hit in return, in which case their lack of heavy armor would not matter in engagements with enemy battleships. A highly advanced mechanical solution to the problem, which had been conceived by Arthur Hungerford Pollen, had been under development since 1906. But in March 1908, the Admiralty adopted an essentially manual system that had been concocted by none other than Dreyer, under the mistaken impression that it was better than the Pollen gear, which was rejected. On the very day that Pollen was notified of the Admiralty's decision, Fisher had arranged the collaboration between Corbett and Dreyer,⁴⁵ and there can be little doubt that the First Sea Lord instigated the relationship in order to bring the historian up-to-date with what he believed to be the latest important developments in fire control. This was classified knowledge that Corbett was then supposed to use discreetly in future articles that supported Admiralty policy as he had done previously.

Dreyer's fire control system, however, was unworkable and his explanation of it notoriously hard to follow.⁴⁶ Corbett, moreover, probably knew through talk with Slade—the Director of Naval Intelligence, his former colleague at the War College, and a strong supporter of Pollen⁴⁷—that there was another side to the story. And he may have read Pollen's revealing account of the affair, which was printed for private circulation in the spring of 1909.⁴⁸ By mid 1909 at the latest, therefore, Corbett was undoubtedly aware of the fact that he was confronted, as he had never been before, by an Admiralty that was divided fundamentally on a technical question that defied definitive explanation. With the navy's gunnery experts deadlocked,⁴⁹ and given the central importance of the

⁴³ Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*.

⁴⁴ "The Armored Cruiser Question," in T. A. Brassey, ed., *The Naval Annual, 1908* (Portsmouth: J. Griffin, 1908), pp. 83–91.

⁴⁵ Churchill College, Cambridge. Fisher Papers, FISR 1/6, P.P. 296: Fisher to Corbett, 10 March 1908, and National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Richmond Papers, RIC/9/1: Dreyer to Corbett, 10 March 1908.

⁴⁶ Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*, pp. 129–32, 136.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁴⁸ Arthur Hungerford Pollen, "Notes, Etc., on the *Ariadne* Trials," April 1909, in Jon Tetsuro Sumida, ed., *The Pollen Papers: The Privately Circulated Printed Works of Arthur Hungerford Pollen, 1901–1916* (London: George Allen and Unwin for the Navy Records Society, 1984), pp. 194–236.

gunnery issue insofar as the future development of the capital ship was concerned, there was little role for historical analysis as a clarifier of either public or secret official discourse. Corbett, in any case, was never again to write directly in support of Admiralty capital ship policy.⁵⁰ His cabinet memorandum of June 1908 was not, however, quite his last word on the subject.

In 1909, the Admiralty ordered the *Lion* class of large armored cruiser, or battle cruiser as the type had come to be known, which was much larger, faster, and more heavily armed than the *Invincible* and her sisters. Fisher believed that the advent of the *Lions* set the stage for the replacement of the battleship by the battle cruiser.⁵¹ But the tactical assumptions underlying the scheme were challenged by Custance in several lectures at the War College delivered in 1910.⁵² Custance argued that the lesson of history was that safety could not be found in keeping the enemy at a distance in order to minimize weaknesses in armor, but required closure to short range, where heavy hitting from the fire of one's guns could be counted on to disarm the enemy quickly.⁵³ By this time, Fisher was out of office, but the attacks on his brain-child, again via hostile interpretations of the past, may have played a part in his asking Corbett to publish a book on naval strategy.⁵⁴ Whatever the truth of the matter, the historian did produce such a work in 1911, entitled *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, and it contained a chapter on the theory of the means of naval warfare, much of which was devoted to the discussion of the battleship and cruiser question.

By 1910, Dreyer's methods of 1908 had been discredited and the navy's experts still remained divided over the practicability of effective firing at long range. In addition Corbett may have been aware that Custance was communicating with Pollen,⁵⁵ who was widely regarded as Britain's leading expert on the fire control problem.⁵⁶ Any defence of the battle cruiser that involved

⁴⁹ Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*, pp. 146–58.

⁵⁰ For Corbett's refusal to produce propaganda for Fisher on other matters, see Schurman, *Corbett*, p. 98.

⁵¹ Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*, p. 162.

⁵² Custance may have been provoked in part by a lecture given by Rear Admiral R. H. S. Bacon, one of Fisher's supporters, in a lecture to the Institution of Naval Architects on 16 March 1910, for which see Rear Admiral R. H. S. Bacon, "The Battleship of the Future," *Transactions of the Institution of Naval Architects*, 52 (1910), pp. 1–21.

⁵³ Admiral Sir Reginald Custance, *The Ship of the Line in Battle* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1912), p. 105. Custance's position was supported by Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge in a lecture to the Institution of Naval Architects, for which see "Fifty Years' Architectural Expression of Tactical Ideas," *Transactions of the Institution of Naval Architects*, 53 (1911), pp. 34–49.

⁵⁴ Julian Stafford Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, edited and introduced by Eric J. Grove (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1988; first published, 1911), p. xxiv. Fisher seems to have prompted one of his other supporters to produce work that dealt in part with his concept of the battle cruiser at this same time, for which see Gerard Fiennes, *The Ocean Empire: Its Dangers and Defence* (London: A. Treherne, 1911), pp. 220–24.

⁵⁵ For the Pollen–Custance correspondence of the period 1909–1912, much of which was about capital ship design, tactics, and fire control, see the Pollen Papers at Churchill College, Cambridge. For the good personal relations between Corbett and Custance, see Schurman, *Corbett*, p. 168.

⁵⁶ For Pollen's article in which he attacked the overemphasis on long-range firing and commented favorably on Custance's War college lectures, see Arthur Hungerford Pollen, "Of War and the Rate of Change," January 1911, in Sumida, ed., *The Pollen Papers*, pp. 281, 288–90.

discussion of fire control thus would have placed Corbett on uncertain ground, without the support of secret information from Fisher, and in the face of an enemy with access to what many would have regarded as authoritative technical advice, which may explain why his treatment of the capital ship question avoided the gunnery aspect altogether. This was achieved by tackling the issue obliquely, making it a matter of the validity of the existing differentiation of the fleet into the categories of battleships, cruisers, and flotilla, each appointed to carry out functions not allowed to the others. Corbett maintained that such a division had been instituted in the mid-eighteenth century by Lord Anson's administrative reforms.⁵⁷ He then asked whether "this specialisation, which has asserted itself down to our own times," was "in the true line of development?"⁵⁸

To answer this question, Corbett first worked up to the general proposition that "the object of naval warfare is to control maritime communications."⁵⁹ He then argued that the fleet created according to Anson's organization was well suited to that task given the nature of Britain's enemies and the technical circumstances of the day, but that two new technical considerations had acted against the continued validity of the traditional constitution of the fleet. These were the development of heavily armed commerce raiders and flotilla vessels equipped with torpedoes, which had called into being large armored cruisers to maintain control of maritime communications and to reinforce the battle fleet screen against disruption by enemy cruisers that would open the way for torpedo attacks against the main battle line by the enemy flotilla. While apparently condemning the "excessive development" of the large cruiser into the battle cruiser, Corbett also noted beforehand that "what Nelson felt for was a battleship of cruiser speed."⁶⁰ And he concluded with the observation that Britain was threatened primarily by Germany's powerful battle fleet, with the strong implication that this justified, if not caused, the building of large cruisers with the power of battleships.⁶¹

While *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* has attained classic status as a work of general naval theory,⁶² its chapter on the constitution of fleets cannot be regarded as anything more than an analytical finesse. The fire control issue was in fact central to the question of battle cruiser policy, and by avoiding it as he did, Corbett produced a piece that must have seemed abstract and obscure even to informed readers of his day.⁶³ Corbett may have been

⁵⁷ Corbett drew heavily here from his own recent extensive study of the subject, for which see Julian Stafford Corbett, *England in the Seven Years' War: A Study in Combined Strategy*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), ii, chapter 12.

⁵⁸ Corbett, *Principles*, p. 112.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁶² Schurman, *The Education of a Navy*, pp. 174–82.

⁶³ For what may have been Pollen's reaction to this chapter several years later, see Churchill College, Cambridge. Pollen Papers, PLLN 6/3: Pollen to Custance, 21 July 1916. For the background to this letter, see Pollen Papers, courtesy of Anthony Pollen: Custance to Pollen, 4 July 1916, and Schurman, *Corbett*, p. 168.

responding to criticism of this sort in his address to the International Congress of Historical Studies in April 1913. "While emphatically repudiating any suggestion that the province of historians is merely to collect and marshal facts for officers to deal with," he said,

it is equally necessary to insist upon the line beyond which historians should not venture in drawing conclusions, and this line can be drawn very distinctly. It lies between historical conclusions, which depend upon the balance of historical evidence and disciplined historical judgement, and technical conclusions, which are arrived at by applying historical conclusions to the solution of modern technical problems. The first are clearly within the province of professed historians, the second are beyond their province and must be left to experts in the Services. The two spheres can easily be kept apart, and their mutual relations can at the same time be actively preserved, if it be only admitted that, as in naval matters, no technical conclusion is safe without seamanship, so no historical conclusion is safe without scholarship.

To clear the point with a concrete instance, it is submitted that the right type of battleship to-day is a technical conclusion. But on the other hand the determination of the principles which decided the type of battleship in the past is an historical conclusion. With the type to-day the historian has nothing to do, but it is his business to see that false historical conclusions are not used to prove that a particular modern type is either right or wrong.⁶⁴

Corbett's enunciation of the principles by which he had lived when writing on the naval problems of his time might be restated as follows: the role of historians as naval analysts was important, but restricted, and that maintaining one's integrity as an historian by withholding comment was preferable to dealing with matters that were beyond the cognizance of serious students of the past.

* * *

In 1907, Custance maintained apropos of the debate over capital ship design that

the naval mind is divided into two schools—the historical and the *matériel*. The adherents of the one appeal for guidance to the great masters of the art of war by sea and land; they hold that it is very important to study tactics and strategy by the light of history. The disciples of the other do not believe the lessons of the past are applicable to the present; they have neglected the study of tactics and strategy, and have devoted their energies to the development of the *matériel*—ships, guns, armour, etc.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Julian Stafford Corbett, "Staff Histories," in Julian Stafford Corbett and H. J. Edwards, eds., *Naval and Military Essays: Being Papers Read in the Naval and Military Section at the International Congress of Historical Studies 1913* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), pp. 32–33.

⁶⁵ "Barfleur" [Admiral Sir Reginald Custance], *Naval Policy: A Plea for the Study of War* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1907), pp. vii–viii.

Such a dichotomy served Custance's polemical requirements, but it should not be accepted as an accurate description of the conflict between Fisher on the one hand and his opponents on the other, which were very much more about differences in financial assumptions, technological perspective, politics, and perhaps social outlook. At the same time, there is no question that Custance's characterization of the situation in terms of historical understanding or the lack thereof set the stage for much of the public and restricted official debate between 1906 and 1911. That his success in this regard did not work to the advantage of his party can be attributed largely to the writing of Corbett.

The criticism of the *Dreadnought* battleship and battle cruiser on historical grounds created a role for Corbett in the discussion of contemporary policy that he might not otherwise have had. Unable to match the Fisher administration in technical debate, the First Sea Lord's opponents called upon history to support their cause. The weaknesses of their analysis, however, invited a historical counterattack. For this task, Corbett was ideally suited, for he had spent many years studying the naval documents of previous centuries and reflecting on their significance. His erudition made less scholarly naval officer writers such as Custance seem like poachers in the forest of historical knowledge in which he was gamekeeper. Thus, although a civilian, Corbett's discussion of contemporary naval matters was cloaked with an authority superior to that of men who nominally would have been considered more expert on the subjects in question. He was then able, through the use in part of his familiarity with classified information that had been given to him by Fisher, to drive home technical, tactical, and strategic propositions that favored the Admiralty case.

By the early twentieth century, it was becoming clear in Britain that in historical disputes, amateurs were no match for professional scholars and, therefore, that an appeal to the sanction of precedent on a particular point of public policy was dangerous if ill-founded.⁶⁶ By the same token, punditry that ranged too far beyond the bounds of history forfeited the mantle of professionalism⁶⁷ and cheapened the dignity of scholarship. This Corbett understood, and explains his refusal to enter into the fray or to do so with extreme reserve when his technical case became problematical, as it did with the battle cruiser considered as a replacement for the battleship. In the particular case of the chapter on the structure of fleets in *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Corbett's argument was indirect to the point of abstraction not because he was an artist

⁶⁶ For the discomfiture of Lords Hugh and Robert Cecil in 1912 over the question of Welsh disestablishment at the hands of Professor A. F. Pollard, the leading historian of Tudor England of his day, see John Grigg, *Lloyd George: From Peace to War 1912–1916* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 27–31.

⁶⁷ For the professional in Britain, see Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989).

without care for relevance,⁶⁸ but because he was a historian following what he believed was the code of conduct of his guild.

The influence of Corbett's analytical writing on Fisher with respect to capital ship design seems to have been negligible. Fisher's views on the subject were formed before he and Corbett began meeting and corresponding,⁶⁹ which is to say that their opinions either no more than coincided or, where they disagreed, as in the case of the battle cruiser, the First Sea Lord's views did not change. Corbett may, indeed, have had a far greater effect on Fisher's thinking through his pure historical writing on Drake—summarized at the beginning of this paper—in which he had described a synthesis of finance, technology, tactics, and strategy as the basis of English naval success. In his analyses of capital ship design, in contrast, Corbett's primarily operational perspective meant that he paid insufficient attention to the financial and technical issues that were an integral part of Fisher's scheme to replace the battleship with the battle cruiser. Probably this, as much as Fisher's penchant for dismissing history as inconsequential when it crossed his purposes,⁷⁰ limited the impact of Corbett's policy pieces on the First Sea Lord's reflections about the optimum characteristics of major fighting vessels.

Corbett's methods of sophisticated historical discourse perhaps had a significant collateral effect when applied to the problems of his day. By discovering the often hidden and complicated relationship between underlying causes and outward effects, the historian countered the tendency to oversimplify through reasoning by analogy. The extent to which his efforts spurred improvement may be indicated by the very considerable advance in the quality of Custance's War College lectures of 1910–11 over that of his articles of 1906–07 in *Blackwood's Magazine*.⁷¹ Insofar as Corbett's influence as an analyst is concerned, therefore, the rigor of his approach could have been as important as his specific arguments. This suggests the following lesson for the present: the most appropriate role of historians with respect to the making of naval policy is not to provide either answers to critics or solutions to problems, but rather to raise the standards of inquiry, broaden perspectives, and otherwise modulate the process of discussion when necessary—limited functions to be sure, but valuable, maybe even invaluable, depending on the circumstances, nonetheless.

⁶⁸ Schurman, "An Historian and the Sublime Aspects of the Naval Profession," pp. 10–11.

⁶⁹ Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy*, pp. 38–45.

⁷⁰ Diary entry of Captain Herbert Richmond for 3 June 1909, in Arthur J. Marder, ed., *Portrait of an Admiral: The Life and Papers of Sir Herbert Richmond* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 52.

⁷¹ "Barfleur" [Custance], *Naval A Policy: A Plea for the Study of War*, and Custance, *Ship of the Line in Battle*.

Process

The Realities of Formulating Modern Naval Strategy

David Alan Rosenberg

It may seem somewhat anachronistic for a historian of post-World War II American naval and nuclear strategy to be contributing to a volume such as this.¹ Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir Herbert W. Richmond made their mark describing and analyzing British naval history and strategy from the sixteenth century through the mid-1900s. Corbett died in 1922, two decades before the first controlled nuclear fission reaction. Richmond witnessed the birth and combat use of the atomic bomb and was able to register his own doubts about the wisdom of a bombing strategy involving “wholesale losses of non-combatant lives, of cities and towns and the treasures of antiquity.”² He died in 1946, however, before the full implications of that weapon for military affairs in general and naval strategy in particular were apparent. But Corbett and Richmond, in their classic historical studies, written during an era of dramatic advances in naval technology, provide models of scholarship as well as some useful insights for those of us seeking to understand the equally dramatic advances of the postwar era.

Consider the words of counsel contained in the 1914 volume *Naval and Military Essays*, the only volume this author has discovered that includes essays prepared by both Corbett and Richmond.³ Significantly, these essays were read before the Naval and Military Section of the January 1913 International Congress of Historical Studies, and dealt with how naval history ought to be written. Both

¹ The author is grateful to Professor Jon T. Sumida and U.S. Navy Captains Kevin Reardon, Larry Seaquist, and Peter Swartz for their most helpful if sometimes painful comments and recommendations on earlier drafts of this essay. He also thanks the Ford Foundation and the John T. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation for their financial support of his archival research into U.S. post-World War II defense policy.

² Admiral Sir Herbert W. Richmond, “Foreword” to Admiral Sir Gerald Dickens, *Bombing and Strategy, The Fallacy of Total War* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., 1946), pp. vii–viii.

³ Julian S. Corbett and H.J. Edwards, eds., *Naval and Military Essays, Being Papers Read in the Naval and Military Section at the International Congress of Historical Sciences, 1913* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1914), pp. 23–38, 39–54.

Corbett and Richmond enthusiastically praised the new, professionally written naval history which, they believed, would revitalize the field and prove useful to naval officers in their efforts to deal with present day challenges. The histories of the past, they argued, were too superficial to be of much value to anyone seriously interested in the subject.

Naval history, in Corbett's words, had been commonly viewed "as a kind of dust heap from which a convenient brick may be extracted" by advocates of a particular theory or policy "to hurl at their opponents."⁴ It was often, Richmond noted, so inadequate or inaccurate in describing how ships and navies functioned that naval officers, who should be benefiting from historical insights, were tempted to dismiss it as nonsense.⁵ The rebirth of naval history, they both agreed, involved a new professionalism in gathering and presenting information, and a broadened understanding of what questions naval history should address.

In his essay, "Staff Histories," Corbett argued that naval history, particularly recent naval history, could probably be written only through a collaboration between historians and naval officers. The former working alone are almost certain to err through their ignorance of the mysterious body of knowledge and experience known as "seamanship," and the latter are just as prone to error because of their lack of training in the art of historical scholarship.

The ideal probably is free collaboration between the historical expert and the naval expert. But we may also look for it with confidence from the naval officer who has been at the pains to acquire the elements of historical technique . . . ; and vice versa from the civilian who has had opportunity of learning the lie of the more obvious pitfalls that beset the path of the naval amateur, and who has taken the trouble to master the not very extensive professional literature which deals with the principles of naval warfare.⁶

Richmond made a similar point, from a different perspective, in "Naval History from the Naval Officer's Point of View." History, he argued can be enormously valuable to naval officers seeking to increase their understanding of their profession. It teaches "how the naval forces of a country have been employed in war; how they have exercised pressure on their own element, and enabled pressure to be exercised on the other element; what limitations are set to the action of a naval force, and what results accrue from its action."⁷ It must, however, address the particular circumstances and concerns that characterize the naval service. It should describe the political and military context of naval operations, the peacetime activities of the navy, the specific instructions given to particular admirals, the hindrances—both natural and man-made—they

⁴ Julian S. Corbett, "Staff Histories" p. 24.

⁵ Captain H.W. Richmond, "Naval History from the Naval Officer's Point of View," pp. 44–45.

⁶ Corbett, "Staff Histories," p. 33.

⁷ Richmond, "Naval History from the Naval Officer's Point of View," p. 40.

encountered in seeking to carry out their instructions, the choices they made before and during battle, and the outcome of those choices.

The historian must provide a broad perspective on events, without losing sight of the actual perspective of the decision maker. In analyzing naval operations in wartime, Richmond wrote:

What we want is a picture of the conflicting elements which an admiral had before him; let us see him in the middle of his distractions; point out to us the information, or the lack of information, on which he had to act. So far as is possible, put us in his position and make us think what we ourselves should have done. This will give us a true idea of war—war as it really is, with the drawn curtain hiding the enemy's movements. Criticism of what a commander did should, if it is to be of any value to a student, be based on the information that commander had at the time, and not on information placed subsequently at our disposal.⁸

However, as Richmond goes on to say, battles are only the most visible moment in the life of a fleet. What comes before a battle is as important in deciding a historical outcome as is the battle itself. He only briefly addresses the issue of planning, but notes that it is a complex and multi-faceted process, not nearly so straight forward and logical as it might appear:

It is not, however, the plans alone that we wish to know. In order to understand them, the factors that led to their making should also be set out. . . . There is rarely, if ever, a straight issue between navy and navy, or fleet and fleet. Every kind of complication affects their freedom of action. Political circumstances may hamper it. When I say hamper, I say it in no complaining sense—it is the nature of things that when more than one influence has to be considered there cannot be complete freedom of action along any one line. This is too frequently overlooked.⁹

Eight decades later, the observations of Corbett and Richmond still provide a sound basis for thinking about naval history. Naval history is a field which requires integrating the knowledge and experience of the historian with that of the naval officer. It must take into account both the uniquely limited perspective of the individual decision maker, and the broad sweep of historical process. It should not be simply ammunition in some policy debate, but it should be useful to naval officers and policymakers seeking to increase their knowledge and evaluate their options.

The history of postwar U.S. naval strategy might at first glance seem far removed from the campaign and battle histories Richmond and Corbett penned, but these points still provide useful guideposts. How did the professional experience of naval officers shape their approach to strategy making? What is

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

the process by which individual and organizational decisions were woven into the web of navy and national strategy? What can we learn from past strategy making which might be helpful in addressing current problems?

Scholars have been tempted to question whether the U.S. Navy had any strategy at all in the period from the 1950s through the 1980s.¹⁰ Naval officers generally made their plans in Cold War secrecy, justified them in national councils enmeshed in fierce interservice and even intraservice rivalry, carried out their operations behind the walls of various levels of security, and found that these factors and the increasingly technical aspects of their profession made it extremely difficult for them to explain to those outside the service their strategic assumptions and understanding of their role in the postwar world.

On 6 August 1952, Rear Admiral Arleigh Burke, then-director of the strategic plans division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, expressed his frustration at the navy's apparent inability to make its voice heard in national debates over strategy and missions in a letter to his Naval Academy classmate and then-naval aide to President Truman, Rear Admiral Robert Dennison:

The Navy is very much in the same position with regard to public relations as a virtuous woman. Virtue seldom is spectacular and less often causes long editorials. Naval philosophy and maritime strategy are not spectacular. They offer no panaceas. Their success depends upon long, dull hours of hard work in which no one action is clearly decisive by itself. Its final success depends upon a series of small successes.¹¹

Burke's frustration illustrates a basic point: naval strategy, as understood by naval officers, may consist not so much in overarching, erudite strategic theories as in day by day policy and program choices, backed up by thorough training and experience in operations and tactics, and by a modern, multi-faceted fleet capable of swift deployment and effective employment. While changing international geopolitics creates new policy challenges and new potential military adversaries, twentieth century navies are technology-based, manpower, and capital intensive institutions which cannot be transformed quickly, and whose

¹⁰ See in particular, Steven Miller, "Rough Sailing: The U.S. Navy in the Nuclear Age" in Michael Mandelbaum, ed., *America's Defense* (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1989) pp. 194-230, and John J. Mearsheimer, "A Strategic Misstep, The Maritime Strategy and Deterrence in Europe" *International Security*, 11, Fall 1986 pp. 3-57, especially 18n. Useful correctives to this view are Michael A. Palmer, *Origins of the Maritime Strategy, American Naval Strategy in the First Postwar Decade* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1988); Richard Hegmann, "Reconsidering the Evolution of the U.S. Maritime Strategy, 1955-1965," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 14 (September 1991), pp. 299-336; and Captain Roger W. Barnett, USN (Ret.) "The Origin of the U.S. Maritime Strategy" Parts I and II, *Naval Forces X*, 4, pp. 52-57, and 5, pp. 58-62.

¹¹ Arleigh Burke to Robert Dennison, 6 August 1952, Personal File, Arleigh Burke Papers, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center (hereafter NHC), Washington, D.C.

basic employment requires a great deal of time and effort to master. Modern naval strategy would appear, at its root, to be, as Corbett implied, the application of professional experience to the solution of technical problems.

This raises some interesting questions. The study of naval history today is characterized by distinct subspecialties. There are historians of ships and weaponry, analysts concerned with the scientific and bureaucratic workings of technological development, historians who write about battles and operations, and scholars who explore the role of navies in foreign policy and diplomacy. Historians of naval strategy often build their study of their subject on a foreign policy and diplomacy foundation, using the context of a geopolitical "forest" to chronicle the interaction of bureaucratic intragovernmental, interservice and intraservice "trees." Absorbed in such a "policy" matrix, recent histories of modern naval strategy often feel little need to master or even consider the intricacies of naval technology, or what Corbett would call the mysterious craft of seamanship. They treat strategy as an intellectual or even cultural exercise, to be judged on its own internal logic.¹²

But just what is the relationship between ideas and naval strategy? Is it concepts, or experience or some combination of the two that marks a successful strategist? What constitutes experience as a strategist? Academic preparation or time at sea? Time at sea on a staff or in command? What does the historian have to understand in order to recreate the circumstances of conceptual birth? What is it that makes a strategic concept significant and effective in shaping the history of naval institutions and warfare?

Process is the key. Naval officers acquire their experience and understanding of naval strategy and operations, and later apply it in decision-making positions, within the unique organizational structure of the navy. The challenge for the historian is to get far enough inside that world to understand the process by which this comes about. It is not enough to identify and analyze ideas and concepts. In order to explain the history of naval strategy, we must move behind the ideas to consider where they came from and how they were translated from theory into practice.

To illustrate how this might be done, I will discuss as an example the historical process surrounding what is arguably the single most significant technological innovation in naval warfare in the post-World War II period: the nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). The development of this weapons system was a revolution as profound as the development of the *Dreadnought* battleship and the prospective fulfillment of Sir John Fisher's plans for the battle

¹² Two recent frustrating examples of these practices are Kenneth J. Hagan, *This People's Navy, The Making of American Sea Power* (New York: Free Press, 1991) and Robert L. O'Connell, *Sacred Vessels: The Cult of the Battleship and the Rise of the U.S. Navy* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991). See also the review of the former work by Michael A. Palmer in *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, 118 (September 1991), pp. 113–14, and Jon T. Sumida's superb analysis of the latter in "Technology, Culture and the Modern Battleship" *Naval War College Review*, XLV (Autumn 1992), pp. 82–87.

cruiser in Corbett's and Richmond's time.¹³ The SSBN was an expression of national as well as naval strategic planning and programming, and a dominant influence in shaping great power naval strategy from 1955 through the end of the Cold War.

The system added a major new dimension to the capability of navies to project power against the shore. Heretofore, naval warfare against shore targets involved protracted operations and more often than not had minimal initial effectiveness. A small number of SSBNs could, depending on the targets the missiles were aimed at, now reduce much of a nation to radioactive rubble in a matter of minutes. Creation of SSBNs in turn generated a powerful new and qualitatively different dynamic for the historically new area of antisubmarine warfare (ASW). Strategic ASW grew increasingly more complex and difficult as nuclear submarines matured in technological sophistication, as nuclear submariners matured in operational experience, and as sea-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) range arcs increased.¹⁴

The SSBN was developed by the navies of the United States, USSR, United Kingdom, and France to meet a national strategic need, relating to each nation's interpretation of the requirements for deterring or fighting an intercontinental thermonuclear war. Just as each nation had its own strategic rationale for building and deploying an SSBN weapons system, each navy undertook to deploy these systems and make plans to counter those of its adversaries according to its own internal analysis. The history of how the Soviet Union and the United States developed, deployed and made preparations to counter each other's SSBNs is a central thread in the evolution of the so-called superpower arms competition at sea.

¹³ The standard work on the *Dreadnought* and battle cruiser is Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *In Defence of Naval Supremacy: Finance, Technology and British Naval Policy, 1889-1914* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989). There are no such works currently available on the development of the SSBN. The significance of the development of the SSBN is acknowledged in Vice Admiral Sir Arthur Hezlet, *The Submarine and Sea Power* (New York: Stein and Day, 1967), pp. 250-62, and Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union Sergei Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1979), pp. 221-22. The most useful works on the development of these weapons systems are U.S. Navy, Strategic Systems Programs, *FBM Facts/Chronology, Polaris-Poseidon-Trident* (Washington: U.S. Navy Department, 1990); Harvey Sapolsky, *The Polaris System Development, Bureaucratic and Programmatic Success in Government* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972); D. Douglas Dalglish and Larry Schweikart, *Trident* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984); and Norman Polmar and Jurrien Noot, *Submarines of the Russian and Soviet Navies, 1718-1990* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1991).

¹⁴ On the development of strategic antisubmarine warfare, see Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Tactical and Strategic Antisubmarine Warfare* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1974); Joel S. Wit, "Advances in Antisubmarine Warfare" *Scientific American*, 244 (February 1981), pp. 31-41; Rear Admiral J.R. Hill, RN, *Anti-Submarine Warfare* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, first edition 1985, second edition 1989); Donald C. Daniel, *Anti-Submarine Warfare and Superpower Strategic Stability* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Tom Stefanick, *Strategic Antisubmarine Warfare and Naval Strategy* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1987); and Jan S. Breemer, "Defeating the Submarine: Choosing ASW Strategies—Part III: The Post-War Era" *Naval Forces X*, 4 (1989), pp. 67-73.

In one sense, it might be considered a straightforward history of the interaction of ballistic missile range arcs and antisubmarine technology. The initial SSBNs on both sides had to deploy relatively close to adversary shores in order to be within range of their targets. For the Americans, with their quieter and more reliable submarines, freedom from geographical constraints on open-ocean deployment, and no sophisticated adversary surveillance systems to note their passage, the range limitations of the early Polaris missiles did not pose serious vulnerability problems. In fact, the U.S. Navy integrated its SSBNs into the overall schema of naval operations and naval warfare hardly at all. U.S. SSBNs became a part of the national triad of strategic systems, a community set largely apart from the rest of the fleet in budgetary and to a lesser extent operational terms. The American ballistic missile submarines operated alone, depending upon stealth and the ocean depths, rather than other parts of the fleet, to protect them from harm.¹⁵

The Soviet Union, however, faced more difficult obstacles. Through the early 1970s, Soviet ballistic missile submarines had to run a gauntlet of American detection systems and deployed aircraft, surface ships and submarines to reach their patrol stations in the Atlantic and later the Pacific. It was only with the 1972 completion and 1973 deployment of the first Delta I class SSBN, whose missiles could hit targets in the continental U.S. from patrol stations in Soviet home waters, that the Soviet sea-based strategic force achieved a degree of protection comparable to that enjoyed by the original American SSBNs. The Soviet navy, in sharp contrast to the Americans, integrated their SSBNs into their overall naval strategy to the point that by the 1970s, protection of Soviet SSBNs in home waters became one of the two highest priority missions—the other being protection of the homeland from nuclear attack—of the Soviet fleet.¹⁶

¹⁵ The subject of U.S. submarine operations remains shrouded in official secrecy. A good overview is provided in the chapters on strategic and attack submarines, respectively, by Vice Admiral Robert Y. Kaufman, USN (Ret.) and Captain James C. Hay, USN (Ret.) in James L. George, ed., *The U.S. Navy, The View from the Mid-1980s* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1985), pp. 193–243; The most tantalizing peek into this world is the series of articles on Cold War submarine operations by Christopher Drew, Michael L. Millenson and Robert Becker in the *Chicago Tribune*, 6–11 January 1991. A critical discussion of SSN and SSBN operations is contained in Desmond Ball, “Nuclear War at Sea” *International Security*, 10 (Winter, 1985–1986), pp. 3–31.

¹⁶ Soviet submarine operations and their place in Soviet naval strategy are most authoritatively discussed in the annual posture statements by successive Directors of Naval Intelligence before the House and Senate Armed Services Committees between 1982 and 1990, and in the Office of Naval Intelligence publication, *Understanding Soviet Naval Developments* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., Six Editions, 1974–1991). The sixth edition contains an especially complete analysis of Soviet naval missions and operations, pp. 20–48. The best overview of Soviet post-World War II naval strategy is Captain 2nd Rank V. Dotsenko, “Soviet Art of Naval Warfare in the Postwar Period” *Morskoi Sbornik*, 7 (1989), pp. 22–28. See also James J. Tritten, *Soviet Naval Forces and Nuclear Warfare, Weapons Employment and Policy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1986); the chapters by Robert Herrick, James M. McConnell, Michael McGwire and Richard L. Haver in James L. George, ed., *The Soviet and Other Communist Navies, The View from the Mid-1980s* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1986), pp. 9–81, 123–132; the chapters by Robert E. McKeown and David Robinson, Lawrence Larson, Richard Fisher, and Keith Allen in Bruce

For the Americans in the 1970s and 1980s, finding means to counter these two complementary, highest priority Soviet naval missions created major elements of the series of plans, programs, presentations, exercises and operations that have come to be known as the Maritime Strategy. The Maritime Strategy was a most controversial approach to naval operations in the waning years of the Cold War. In the short run it may best be understood as a series of products designed to justify Reagan administration naval policy and program decisions and a collection of offensive operational concepts designed to protect sea lines of communications and support American and allied forces fighting a conventional war in Europe.¹⁷

In the long term, however, much of the Maritime Strategy represents the culmination of the chain of events set in motion by the development of the SSBN in the 1950s. Arguably, if the American SSBN had not been developed, it would have been nearly impossible for the Soviet Navy's leadership or even Premier Nikita Khrushchev to have pushed the land-fixated General Staff to produce a Soviet counterpart. Moreover, if the Soviet SSBN force did not exist, or if it was incapable of carrying out its primary missions of "destroying ground targets" from Soviet home waters, then Soviet naval strategy designed to protect the homeland through attacks on "enemy offensive naval force groupings" would likely have been quite different.¹⁸ The U.S. Maritime Strategy of the 1980s, while still "global, forward and Allied," would likely have been quite different in scope, focus and anticipated effectiveness as well. As such, the development of the American Polaris SSBN, and the late 1980s debate over the Maritime Strategy are in effect the bookends which define the most recent period in the history of naval strategy.

It might appear that this process of technological innovation, strategic adaptation, response and counterresponse is so logical as to be not only predictable but almost inevitable. But this is certainly only true in hindsight. The internal dynamics of the U.S. and Soviet navies and U.S. and Soviet governments were such that a multitude of different choices might have been made, fundamentally altering this dynamic.

W. Watson and Susan M. Watson, eds., *The Soviet Navy, Strengths and Liabilities* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 57-71, 136-142, 162-167, and 182-193; and Bruce W. Watson, *Red Navy at Sea, Soviet Naval Operations on the High Seas, 1956-1980* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982).

¹⁷ The Maritime Strategy has generated a tremendous amount of commentary. The most valuable source on this vast literature is Captain Peter M. Swartz, USN, *The Maritime Strategy Debates: A Guide to the Renaissance of U.S. Naval Strategic Thinking in the 1980* Report NPS-56-88-009 prepared for Strategic Concepts Branch (Op-603), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (Monterey, Calif.: Naval Postgraduate School, 24 February 1988). The best sources on the history of the strategy are John B. Hattendorf, "The Evolution of the Maritime Strategy, 1977 to 1987," *Naval War College Review*, XLI (Summer 1988), pp. 7-28; Frederick H. Hartmann, *Naval Renaissance, The U.S. Navy in the 1980s* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1990); and Captain Linton F. Brooks, "Naval Power and National Security, The Case for the Maritime Strategy," *International Security*, 11 (Fall 1986), pp. 58-88.

¹⁸ Dotsenko, "Soviet Art of Naval Warfare," pp. 22-28.

The creation of the SSBN/SLBM weapons system “out of whole cloth” to meet an anticipated rather than an actual national requirement (anticipated in the sense of the expected eventual vulnerability of land-based missile systems) was in itself a remarkable achievement. In the mid-1950s, the high command of the United States Navy was by no means enthusiastic about taking on a fleet ballistic missile development project. The requirements, both technological and fiscal, of modernizing and replacing the existing fleet of World War II era warships were generally considered more than sufficient to strain navy resources during the Eisenhower administration. In fact, by late 1957, after the Polaris program had been underway for two years, navy planners in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations could see that the costs of that program, in combination with the decision to build only nuclear-powered submarines and to introduce nuclear power into a certain proportion of new construction surface ships, would make it necessary to abandon the goal of maintaining a 900-ship fleet into the 1970s.¹⁹ Since the Polaris program was not consistent with existing navy plans or desires, and was likely to inhibit rather than support the achievement of overall ship-building goals, why did it happen at all?

A similar set of questions could be asked about the genesis of the Maritime Strategy in the 1980s. On the surface, the Maritime Strategy appeared to be a shrewd, politically motivated ploy meant to justify the Reagan administration’s expansion of navy budgets to build a 600-ship active fleet. The summer 1982 first draft of the “Maritime Strategy” slide presentation was designed to precede and in a way justify the budgetary “warfare appraisals” for the Fiscal Year 1984 Program Objectives Memorandum (POM) formulated in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.²⁰ Simultaneous with the preparation of the Maritime Strategy presentation, the Extended Planning Annex to that same POM-84 concluded presciently that “when [past] cost risk and likely budget realities are considered together, and if the trends continue unabated or we take no corrective action, a ‘12 CVBG Navy’ of from 450 to 500 ships *may be* the upper limit on what we can afford.” This annex had been prepared to serve as a guide to problems that would face the 600-ship navy program in the “out years” and would permit the service leadership to prepare for and perhaps find ways of overcoming them. When this annex was presented to Navy Secretary John Lehman, however, he regarded the “state of the art” forecasting analysis not as

¹⁹ Rear Admiral R.E. Rose; Memorandum for the Chief of Naval Operations, Subject: Inadequacy of \$1.5 billion Shipbuilding Funds Level, Serial 0041P03, 13 September 1957, A1-1(1) Unlabelled Folder, and Rear Admiral R.E. Rose, Memorandum for the Chief of Naval Operations, Subject: Impact of Polaris Program on Shipbuilding and Conversion Program, Serial 034903B1, 13 December 1957, A1-1(1) Shipbuilding and Conversion Programs Folder, both in Box 1, Chief of Naval Operations Op-00 Papers, 1957, NHC. On opposition to Polaris, see David Alan Rosenberg, “Arleigh Albert Burke,” in Robert W. Love, Jr., ed., *The Chiefs of Naval Operations* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1980), pp. 277–79.

²⁰ Hattendorf, “The Evolution of the Maritime Strategy,” pp. 17–23.

an ally in his campaign for the fleet, but rather a “not invented here” threat, and ordered its distribution within and beyond the Pentagon curtailed.²¹

The central dynamic of the Maritime Strategy, however, was independent of this building program. The 600-ship navy ultimately proved untenable, as budget realities ended real growth in 1986, but the Maritime Strategy became the agreed naval operational concept for America and its allies in both the Atlantic and Pacific through the end of the Cold War. By 1983–1984, the strategy had evolved beyond a force justifier to serve as a “current force” operational concept. It dominated war games, exercises and operational plans, and filled a long-standing void at war colleges as the doctrinal foundation of U.S. naval power. As in the case of Polaris, budget battles both expressed and obscured deeper questions of service philosophy and strategy. The entire story of this era of navy strategy-making cannot be told until declassification brings all the relevant facts to light. Many aspects of it are, however, already evident, and provide interesting recent counterparts to the Polaris story.

In order to explore such issues, and suggest an approach to investigating similar historical developments, I have put together a list of seventeen topics for investigation which point the way to the kinds of information we need to understand the modern naval strategy-making process. I will illustrate each with reference to the era of American naval strategy which began with the Polaris program, and culminated in the Maritime Strategy.

The first factor is *the nature of training and education programs, career patterns and professional specialization of officers in the naval service*. The naval officers who oversaw the development of Polaris and those who created the Maritime Strategy represent two different generations of military professionals.

The generation in command of the navy in the 1950s had reached professional maturity during the interwar years and World War II. This was the generation that produced the first career aviators and submariners. It was also a generation which put a premium on educating many of its best line officers in technical engineering specialties, including aeronautical, ordnance, and propulsion engineering, and gave these officers the responsibility for developing new technology in conjunction with civilian industry. These officers were used to technological innovation, and even those tied to the old “Gun Club” of the Bureau of

²¹ Extended Planning Branch (Op-965), The Extended Planning Annex for POM-84, 19 August 1982. Secret Paper, declassified with deletions by the Program Resource Appraisal Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 17 December 1991. The potential importance of this study and its ultimate fate was witnessed by the author, who was a naval reserve officer supporting Op-965 on a number of projects in the summer of 1982. The paper was also the subject of a number of discussions between the author and Rear Admiral J.A. Baldwin, Jr., the 1982 director of Op-96, during his tour as President of the Naval War College, 1986–1987, and with the EPA’s author, Commander (now Captain) Stephen Russell Woodall. See also Stephen Russell Woodall, “Strategic Forecasting in Long-Range Military Force Planning: With an Application to the Naval Case” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1985), pp. 362–69.

Ordnance were in fact active participants not just in the improvement of battleship gunnery and fire control, but also radar proximity fuses, rocket projectiles, and guided missiles. This provided a strong foundation for developing the fleet ballistic missile.²²

The generation of American naval officers who created the Maritime Strategy in the 1980s included the first career nuclear submariners to reach flag rank. These officers spent essentially their entire careers in nuclear submarines, both attack and ballistic missile, rather than in diesel boats or surface ships. They also spent their entire careers immersed in a Cold War environment and operating in great secrecy against an opponent, the Soviet Navy, that was growing in sophistication, both technological and operational, particularly in its submarine forces. Like their air and surface counterparts, the submariners' experience of naval strategy was defined by their warfare community. In the 1980s, three of these officers became successive Chiefs of Naval Operations, while others came to command the major fleets. These officers did not initiate the Maritime Strategy, but they were in positions to approve, embellish, and popularize it. As such, their influence on the strategy's ultimate disposition and dissemination was very strong.²³

This brings us to *the career patterns and operational, technical and staff backgrounds of individual naval officers in significant (national or fleet) positions of leadership*. A critical factor in the creation of the Polaris program was the fact that Arleigh Burke was the Chief of Naval Operations at the time. Burke was an ordnance specialist, a beneficiary of the technical training afforded to the best of his generation of naval officers. Further, Burke had been one of the few surface officers to be accepted by the rising generation of aviator admirals because of his wartime service as chief of staff to Admiral Marc Mitscher, commander of Fast Carrier Task Force

²² On the training and career patterns of the interwar generation of American naval officers, see David Alan Rosenberg, "Officer Development in the Interwar Navy: Arleigh Burke—The Making of a Naval Professional" *Pacific Historical Review*, XLIV (November 1975), pp. 503–26; John B. Lundstrom, *The First Team, Pacific Naval Air Combat from Pearl Harbor to Midway* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1984); and Berend D. Bruins, "Navy Bombardment Missile Programs to 1960: Examination of Weapons Innovation Hypotheses" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1981), especially chapters 3, 4 and 6.

²³ These observations on the changing career patterns and influence of American submarine officers are based on the author's experience as a consultant to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, 1974–1983 and 1990–1992; as a professor of strategy and operations at the U.S. Naval War College, 1985–1990; and as a naval reserve intelligence officer supporting the Office of Naval Intelligence since 1984. See also Hartmann, *Naval Renaissance*, pp. 77–80; Clay Blair, Jr., *Silent Victory, The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1975), pp. 877–92; Francis Duncan, *Rickover and the Nuclear Navy, The Discipline of Technology* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1990), pp. 245–51, 281–94; John F. Lehman, Jr., *Command of the Seas, Building the 600 Ship Navy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), pp. 1–38; Norman Polmar and Thomas B. Allen, *Rickover, Controversy and Genius* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), pp. 267–350; Theodore Rockwell, *The Rickover Effect, How One Man Made a Difference* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1992), pp. 308–10, 329; and Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., *On Watch* (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Books, 1976), pp. 85–122.

58. Finally, Burke had been a key participant in the postwar battles among the services over roles and missions, strategy, and budgets, acquiring a keen appreciation for the requirements of nuclear deterrence. When Burke decided to move ahead with the Polaris program in 1955–1957, he not only understood its technical parameters, *he also had the personal standing* necessary to overcome the significant opposition to it that existed across the warfare communities within the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, and a clear sense of its strategic implications for both the navy and the nation.²⁴

By the 1980s, very few of the navy's top admirals had the kind of extensive background Arleigh Burke had prior to flag rank in operations *beyond his own warfare specialty*. The technical demands of service at sea in the 1960s and 1970s had ended what little cross-pollination had existed among warfare communities. For example, naval aviators followed a more narrow career track than their interwar or World War II generation predecessors, rarely moving outside of their fighter, attack, airborne early warning, antisubmarine, patrol, or helicopter specializations until reaching the rank of senior commander or captain. Fighter and attack aviators dominated the flag ranks of the aviation community through the middle to late 1980s; most of these officers had little exposure to non-aviation community issues until after they reached flag rank. The navy's political-military expertise was invested in a small corps of specialists cultivated mostly from the surface warfare and patrol aviation communities. Few of these officers reached flag rank; fewer still achieved three or four stars. Further, only a minority of the service's top echelon leaders in Washington, Norfolk, London, Naples, or Pearl Harbor were war college graduates (in contrast with all but one of the navy's admirals in 1941), much less trained in international relations at civilian institutions.²⁵

Submariners, who in the days of a primarily diesel boat force had had to enter the surface community if they wanted to make flag rank, could now spend their careers through at least rear admiral and even vice admiral in nuclear submarine sea and shore assignments. A few were groomed for high command with a tour as executive assistant to a fleet commander or the CNO, but these were rare exceptions. Admiral Hyman Rickover, who dominated the American nuclear

²⁴ Rosenberg, "Arleigh Albert Burke," pp. 269–306; David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill, Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945–1960," *International Security*, 7 (Spring 1983), pp. 3–71.

²⁵ These observations are based on the author's experience described in note 23 *ante.*; the short biographies of recently selected flag officers published in *Navy Times*, *Naval Aviation News*, and *Surface Warfare* magazine from the mid-1970s through 1991; a review of the short official biographies of 1970s and 1980s CNOs and Fleet CinCs maintained by the Naval Historical Center; a review of the biographies of aviator and surface CNOs since 1961 in Love, *The Chiefs of Naval Operations*; John B. Hattendorf, B. Mitchell Simpson, and John R. Wadleigh, *Sailors and Scholars, The Centennial History of the U.S. Naval War College, 1884–1894* (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 1984), pp. 275–323; John M. Collins, *U.S. Defense Planning, A Critique* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 49–72, 133–44; and Captain Paul R. Schratz, USN (Ret.), "Where Will the Warriors Come From?" *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, 115 (June 1989), pp. 62–69.

submarine program and many other engineering and programmatic aspects of the navy through his retirement in 1982, actively disapproved not only of submariners attending war colleges but of the war college curricula. His attitude, combined with the heavy seagoing and technical demands of a nuclear submarine career, resulted in a situation where virtually none of the submarine admirals who were rising to high command positions in the navy of the 1970s and 1980s had a strong politico-military background.²⁶

Most of the navy's flag officers came late to the more sublime aspects of their profession, and thus approached strategy not from a theoretical or historical perspective, but from a more narrow operational one, based on their own experience at sea in their warfare specialties, and with a technological and programmatic orientation built on recent Washington budget battles. Flag officers could delegate the preparation of briefings, papers and testimony to their political-military specialists, and would read and be educated by their products. But they rarely, in the period between the 1960s and the 1980s, engaged in broad strategic analysis of how the U.S. Navy related to national military strategy, preferring instead to emphasize the shifting naval balance between the U.S. and Soviet navies.²⁷

One area in which most top echelon navy leaders were generally unversed was that of nuclear strategy. This is not to say that admirals had no experience with nuclear weapons. From the 1950s through the late 1980s and early 1990s, those weapons were a fairly ubiquitous presence on American naval vessels. Attack aviators were trained to deliver nuclear bombs; surface officers had responsibility for safeguarding and employing nuclear-tipped antisubmarine rockets (ASROC) and surface-to-air missiles with atomic warheads; and the submariners had custody of nuclear-tipped torpedoes, rocket-propelled depth

²⁶ See the published sources cited in note 23, *ante.*, and the memoirs of Admiral William J. Crowe, with David Chernoff, *In the Line of Fire, From Washington to the Gulf, the Politics and Battles of the New Military* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993).

²⁷ This observation is based on a review of Chief of Naval Operations and Secretary of the Navy posture statements and congressional testimony from the 1960s through the early 1980s. See also Lawrence Korb, "George W. Anderson," Floyd D. Kennedy, Jr., "David Lamar McDonald," J. Kenneth McDonald, "Thomas Hinman Moorer," and Norman Friedman, "Elmo Russell Zumwalt," all in Love, *The Chiefs of Naval Operations*, pp. 321-79; Zumwalt, *On Watch*, pp. 329-48, 461-64; Lawrence J. Korb, "The Erosion of American Naval Preeminence, 1962-1978," and Floyd D. Kennedy, Jr., "From SLOC Protection to a National Maritime Strategy: The U.S. Navy Under Carter and Reagan, 1977-1984" in Kenneth J. Hagan, ed., *In Peace and War, Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, second revised edition, 1984) pp. 327-70; and Robert W. Love, Jr., *History of the U.S. Navy, Vol. II, 1942-1991* (Harrisburg, Penna.: Stackpole Books, 1992) pp. 602-728. The critical departures to this pattern were Admiral Zumwalt's "Project Sixty" effort in the summer of 1970, Admiral James L. Holloway III's revision A of NWP-1, *Strategic Concepts of the U.S. Navy* in 1978, and Admiral Thomas B. Hayward's "Fundamental Principles of U.S. Naval Strategy." See Roger W. Barnett, "The Origins of the U.S. Maritime Strategy," Part II, pp. 58-62; Zumwalt, *On Watch*, pp. 59-84; Hartmann, *Naval Renaissance*, pp. 14-40; and the author's unclassified, unpublished study "Project SIXTY; Twelve Years After," prepared for Op-965 in the summer of 1982.

bombs, cruise missiles (Regulus and later Tomahawk TLAM-N), and, of course, the Polaris, Poseidon, and Trident ballistic missiles. Fleet commanders had had to take such nuclear capabilities into account as they deployed and employed their forces. Further, the Chief of Naval Operations and a small select group of his top planners had been forced to contend with the knotty problems of nuclear arms control as part of the CNO's duties as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Most naval officers, however, saw the weapons as a presumably necessary evil, surrounded by a vast array of burdensome and stringent custodial and safety requirements. There were few navy precepts on tactical and theater nuclear warfare comparable to the army's extensive atomic operations field manuals and planning doctrine. Equally important, despite the growing role of the American SSBN force in U.S. nuclear planning and strategy, there was no institutional impetus for top SSBN skippers to master the intricacies of nuclear targeting or operations. Such competency usually only won an officer a long tour of shore duty at Submarine Force Atlantic or Pacific headquarters planning SSBN operations, or a tour in Omaha at Strategic Air Command headquarters on the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff, followed by another such tour in Washington, followed by retirement.²⁸

The navy's "nuclear allergy" so to speak, had an important impact on how the 1980s Maritime Strategy was defined. Although a number of the action officers involved with the strategy's gestation had both educational background and experience (even though they were not submariners!) in nuclear issues, they consciously chose to make the strategy a predominantly conventional concept designed to address the East-West conventional balance and the best ways of using naval power to offset Soviet advantage at sea and ashore. The anti-SSBN, anti-bastion aspects of the strategy, while cutting to the heart of anticipated Soviet naval strategy, was but one part, and a most sensitive one at that, of a broad-ranging, all-inclusive approach aimed at exploiting the full range of maritime capability. Subsequent action officers followed this approach "as a matter of ideology." While nuclear escalation issues dominated much of the public and academic debate on the strategy, the internal navy view of the strategy remained comfortably conventional, reflecting not just the fact that much of the

²⁸ The best published statement on the navy's problems with maintaining a core competency in nuclear planning may be found in Captain Linton F. Brooks, USN, "Dropping the 'Baton,'" U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, 115, (June 1989), pp. 32-36. These observations also reflect the author's eighteen years of service as a consultant and naval reserve officer supporting Op-604, the Nuclear Planning Branch, from 1974 to 1980; Op-65, the Nuclear Warfare and Arms Control Division, from 1980 to 1992; and Op-514, the Nuclear Policy Branch, since 1992, all of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. The most succinct statement on navy nuclear policy came from an officer responsible for theater nuclear planning within in one of those organizations. He stated: "The Navy policy on nuclear weapons is 'pfftht' (making a spitting motion), but that does not mean we do not care." On army nuclear policy, see John P. Rose, *The Evolution of U.S. Army Nuclear Doctrine, 1945-1980* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980) and John J. Midgley, Jr., *Deadly Illusions, Army Policy for the Nuclear Battlefield* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986).

navy had predominantly non-nuclear roles and capabilities, and the Reagan administration's national policy emphasized a protracted conventional war strategy, but also the dominant service view that nuclear weapons were at best incidental to the navy's wartime mission, and in many ways more of a nuisance than an asset.²⁹

A third set of factors for consideration in analyzing strategic initiatives would be *the procurement costs, capabilities, operating patterns, and sustainment requirements of naval weapons systems*. These are the most obvious manifestations of naval power, but also the least well analyzed or understood by historians. Procurement costs determine the type and characteristics of ships and weapons that can be built and maintained. The other three determine how they can be used. Together they set the limits of the possible for what naval forces can accomplish. Naval officers spend their careers learning these systems and that experience permeates their approach to strategy making.

During the period between the mid-1950s and the mid-1980s, the U.S. Navy underwent a profound generational change not just in its leaders but also in the weaponry it procured and the way that that weaponry was operated. With respect to operations, continuous overseas deployments begun after World War II were institutionalized in the 1950s as the standard operating patterns of the American navy. In a departure from the Mahanian dictum "never divide the battle fleet," U.S. Navy operating forces were divided into four fleets, two of which were permanently based overseas along with a few task forces tied to such trouble spots as the Persian Gulf. Ships rotated on a set schedule to provide a peacetime presence in support of allies and interests around the world. Six-month or longer deployments (every eighteen months) largely defined the operational calendars of both ships and men. This global scheduling concept was adhered to, albeit in altered form, even during major periods of combat in Korea and Vietnam. New weapons systems expanded strategic options from the 1950s to the 1980s. Nuclear attack and ballistic missile submarines were but one of the critical innovations. At least three generations of land and carrier-based naval aircraft were procured; helicopter technology matured and became ubiquitous throughout the fleet in logistics, antisubmarine, and mine warfare roles; multi-purpose surface-to-air, air-to-air, air-to-ground, land-attack and antiship missiles joined the fleet; new classes of aircraft carriers, and guided missile surface combatants were built; and a new amphibious force, based on the proven capabilities of landing craft and the promise of helicopter assault, was procured. Antisubmarine warfare became increasingly dependent on the integration of detection systems such as the 1950s Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) of fixed

²⁹ Statements regarding the central conventional thrust of the Maritime Strategy and the "ideological" approach to this issue on the part of its action officers are based in part on comments on an earlier draft of this paper provided the author by Captain Larry Seaquist in December 1992. See also Hattendorf, "Evolution of the Maritime Strategy," pp. 18-25.

ocean listening posts with weapons such as patrol aircraft, hunter-killer task groups and attack submarines. By the 1980s, space and electronic warfare had matured as an integral part of naval warfare as well, and significant resources went to the construction of Aegis-guided missile cruisers and destroyers and the development and deployment of space-based surveillance and communications systems. All these represented a cumulative change in the way the U.S. Navy was built, maintained, and operated, and provided the context for understanding the ballistic missile era of naval strategy.³⁰

The fourth set of factors builds directly on the third, namely *changes in tactical doctrine and/or naval operational art*. As weapons systems changed, new tactics had to be perfected to utilize and defend against them. Jet aircraft, guided missiles, and nuclear weapons dominated the problem of anti-air warfare (AAW). This led to new task force formations designed to deceive an attacking enemy; new command and control arrangements, such as the composite warfare commander (CWC), to maximize coordination of operations; and the use of long-range defensive systems to kill the archer (i.e. the missile launcher) before his arrows could be loosed at their targets. The nuclear submarine, with its speed, stealth and endurance, presented unprecedented tactical challenges. By the 1950s, the most effective antisubmarine weapon was known to be another submarine, and the next thirty years were spent realizing that potential. By the 1980s, American tactical innovations in AAW and ASW, based on years of exercises and operations,

³⁰ The changes in U.S. Navy operating patterns is generally described in Love, *History of the U.S. Navy*, Vol. II, pp. 278–485; Palmer, *Origins of the Maritime Strategy*, pp. 172; Jan S. Bremer, *U.S. Naval Developments* (Annapolis, Md.: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Co., 1983); and Adam B. Siegal, *U.S. Navy Crisis Response Activity, 1946–1989: A Preliminary Report* (Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses Research Memorandum CRM 89–315, November 1989). On specific fleets and forces, see in particular, Lieutenant Commander (now Rear Admiral) Philip Alphonse Dur, *The Sixth Fleet, “A Case Study of Institutionalized Naval Presence, 1946–1968,”* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1975); Edward J. Sheehy, *The U.S. Navy, The Mediterranean, and the Cold war, 1945–1947* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1992); Commander Joseph Ambrose Sestak, Jr., “The Seventh Fleet, A Study of Variance Between Policy Directives and Military Force Postures,” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1984); Joel J. Sokolsky, *Seapower in the Nuclear Age, The United States Navy and NATO, 1949–1980* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1991); Rolf Tamnes, *The United States and the Cold War in the High North* (Brookfield, Vermont: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1991); and Michael A. Palmer, *On Course to Desert Storm, The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1992). Changes in naval technology are exceptionally well covered if not documented in the works of Norman Friedman, particularly his four superb illustrated design histories of United States destroyers, aircraft carriers, battleships and cruisers published by the Naval Institute Press between 1982 and 1985, his study of *Carrier Air Power* (New York: The Rutledge Press, 1981), his assessment of *The Postwar Naval Revolution* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1986), and his reference works, especially *U.S. Naval Weapons* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1983) and *The Naval Institute Guide to World Naval Weapons Systems, 1991–1992* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1991). See also Robert Gardiner and Randall Gray, eds., *Conway’s All the World’s Fighting Ships, 1947–1982*, 2 volumes (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1983); Rear Admiral E.W. King, ed., *Naval Engineering and American Sea Power* (Annapolis, Md.: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company, 1989) especially chaps. 8–11; and Bruce W. Watson, *The Changing Face of the World’s Navies, 1945 to the Present* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1991).

created an increasingly confident tactical foundation for the Maritime Strategy. The development of the Harpoon antiship missile likewise transformed much of anti-surface (ASUW) doctrine, while helicopters and air cushion landing craft did the same for amphibious doctrine.³¹

Also closely related is *the administrative structure, operational doctrine, strategic plans and command and control organization of tactical units beyond individual ships* (including as appropriate, squadrons, flotillas, task groups, task forces, task fleets and regional commands and fleets.) Some of these factors, such as the creation of the four U.S. task fleets and the role of the composite warfare commander have already been mentioned. It should be emphasized, however, that in the U.S. Navy, wartime and crisis strategic planning and operational decision making is largely decentralized along joint and regional command lines, rather than dictated from the office of the CNO in Washington. This has remained true, despite increasing postwar centralization of American national defense organization.

The regional commanders in chief (CINCs) in Pearl Harbor and Norfolk, and their subordinate Atlantic and Pacific fleet CINCs, plus the Commander in Chief of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, all have extraordinary authority to constitute, command, and conduct military operations. The offensive thinking and planning that came to characterize the Maritime Strategy in the mid 1980s had its genesis in U.S. Naval Forces in Europe and Atlantic and Pacific Fleet concepts in the late 1970s, and the NATO Concept of Maritime Operations and Pacific Command Campaign Plan in the early 1980s.³²

The next factors are two halves of a whole. These are *the sources of intelligence information, including their nature, their quality, and their frequency; and the process of intelligence production, analysis, and dissemination.* These factors are essentially complementary, but distinct from one another. No

³¹ The development of modern naval tactics is less well covered than the development of modern naval technology. Useful assessments include Captain Wayne T. Hughes, USN (Ret.), *Fleet Tactics, Theory and Practice* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1986); and two articles by Karl Lautenschlager, "Technology and the Evolution of Naval Warfare," and "The Submarine in Naval Warfare, 1901–2001," which are most readily available in Steven E. Miller and Stephen Van Evera, *Naval Strategy and National Security, An International Security Reader* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 173–221 and 238–84. On the Composite Warfare Commander concept, see Captain Rodney P. Rempt, USN, "Battle Group Command and Control Organization," "Unpublished Paper, Advanced Research Program, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, R.I., November 1986.

³² The U.S. Navy's command structure is described in Breemer, *U.S. Naval Developments*, pp. 33–60; the "fleet organization" chapters of Norman Polmar, *The Ships and Aircraft of the United States Fleet* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 11th through 15th editions, 1978–1993); and The Santa Fe Corporation, *A Guide to U.S. Navy Command, Control and Communications* (San Diego: Naval Ocean Systems Center, July 1979). The influence of CinCs concepts on the Maritime Strategy is described in Hattendorf, "Evolution of the Maritime Strategy," pp. 19–21; Robert S. Wood, "Fleet Renewal and Maritime Strategy in the 1980s" in John B. Hattendorf and Robert S. Jordan, eds., *Maritime Strategy and the Balance of Power, Britain and America in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 330–47; and Robert S. Jordan, *Alliance Strategy and Navies, The Evolution and Scope of NATO's Maritime Dimension* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), pp. 49–62.

matter how good an intelligence source might be, it will be worthless if its message and significance are not brought to the attention of decision makers in such a way that they use it to shape their plans and programs. This includes all types of intelligence, be it reconnaissance imagery taken by satellites or aircraft, communications intelligence intercepts, or human intelligence reports. The history of intelligence as it relates to American postwar naval strategy remains largely unknown. Certain patterns are clear, however.

First, technical intelligence-gathering, designed to track the research, development, construction, evaluation, and deployment of adversary weapons systems has had a high priority and has guided the development of much of America's "national technical means" for monitoring the Soviet Union in general and the Soviet navy in particular. Analysis of this technical intelligence has dominated postwar intelligence reporting on the Soviet navy. The U.S. Navy pioneered in developing novel intelligence systems, not just to gather intelligence but also to process and disseminate it. In the early 1970s, the Ocean Surveillance Information System (OSIS) was established in a series of national and fleet operational intelligence centers and facilities to monitor maritime threats worldwide, but particularly the ever-expanding Soviet navy. By the 1980s, this system was providing the fleet CinCs and the navy high command in Washington an unprecedented picture of the capabilities and disposition of current Soviet forces. For the first time navy planners and commanders could follow the movements of an enemy navy both theater-wide and globally on a day to day basis, providing a great sense of confidence in analyzing Soviet naval operations.³³

The U.S. Navy was also giving increasing attention to analyzing Soviet military thinking and planning, based in part on Soviet military writings and doctrine. By the early 1980s, an intelligence consensus on the anticipated wartime role of the Soviet navy, represented by the 1982 National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet naval forces, had emerged. It concluded that the Soviet navy would follow a largely defensive strategy, placing highest priority on defending the Soviet homeland from seaborne attack out to a range of 2,000 to 3,000 kilometers (in range of U.S. SLOCs to Europe and East Asia), and on the defense of its sea-based strategic strike forces which were to be deployed into defended maritime bastions near Soviet home waters.³⁴

This intelligence consensus appears to have been a critical component in the U.S. Navy's decision to adopt an avowedly offensive maritime strategy toward

³³ Vice Admiral Samuel L. Gravely, Jr., USN (Ret.) "The Ocean Surveillance Information System (OSIS)," and Franklin W. Diederich, "Architectural Considerations for the C³ Aspects of a Space-Based Ocean Surveillance System," in Gordon R. Nagler and Richard D. DeLauer, *Naval Tactical Command and Control* (Washington, D.C.: AFCEA International Press, 1985), pp. 138-47 and 192-206.

³⁴ On Soviet naval strategy, see the sources cited in footnote 16, *ante*. The 1982 national intelligence estimate is noted in Hattendorf, "Evolution of the Maritime Strategy," p. 23.

the U.S.S.R. in the early 1980s, discarding plans for the kind of defensive barrier strategy that had been put forward in the 1960s and 1970s. If the U.S.S.R. was predisposed to use large portions of its naval air and submarine forces to defend the approaches to the motherland and to shelter its SSBNs in home waters, navy strategists argued, it was clearly in the American interest to reinforce such an inclination. The strategy would serve, it was hoped, as an active deterrent to an actual outbreak of hostilities during a crisis, and if hostilities broke out, as a means of keeping the Soviet navy on the defensive and in a position of relative vulnerability.³⁵

The full influence of this intelligence consensus on the American naval leadership could be measured by relatively simple criteria: What did the admirals know? When did they know it? What were their sources of information? And how directly did this information influence the admirals' decisions on strategy and force structure? The answers to these questions may not be made public until well into the twenty-first century, but such an assessment will be critical to a solid historical understanding of how late Cold War American military strategy was made.

Strategic planners are among those who make the most intensive use of intelligence products, and *the structure, organization, and procedures of naval service-wide strategic planning* is the next factor of significance in the strategy-making process. In contrast to the other American armed services, the U.S. Navy has historically been cool to the idea of producing a written strategic doctrine. Navy leaders from Forrest Sherman to Elmo Zumwalt and James Holloway III have produced statements indicating some of the basic concepts underlying strategic and operational plans, but uncertainty regarding just what form wartime operations at sea would take has led the service to avoid adopting a single, detailed plan of action for hostilities. Such detailed planning decisions have instead been delegated to the flag officers responsible for the operating forces in a theater. Contingency plans have been made, but not collectively codified as doctrine. Planners in the fleet headquarters in Pearl Harbor, Norfolk, London, and at sea have jealously guarded against having their decision-making prerogatives appropriated by Washington. Even agreed concepts on task force composition and operations *among the fleet CinCs* have been resisted until very recently.

The U.S. Navy's strategic planning function at the seat of government has resided in the office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Plans, Policy and Operations since the early 1950s. Various divisions of this organization have played a key role in formulating basic naval strategic concepts since that time.³⁶

³⁵ The best explication of this deterrent view remains Linton Brooks, "Naval Power and National Security: The Case for the Maritime Strategy," pp. 62–73.

³⁶ The U.S. Navy's headquarters organization is best described in Thomas C. Hone, *Power and Change, The Administrative History of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1946–1986* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1989).

In the 1950s, the Strategic Plans Division (Op-60) was critical in assisting Chief of Naval Operations Arleigh Burke to develop an alternative nuclear strategy for the United States which is best described as “finite deterrence.”

This concept looked to a relatively small Polaris force of some forty-five SSBNs to serve as a secure national deterrent, safe at sea from the threat of a surprise attack. Navy strategic planners hoped it might ultimately replace the much larger number of Air Force land-based bombers and ballistic missiles built and planned by the Eisenhower administration. Reliance on SSBNs would reduce national requirements for strategic nuclear forces, they argued, by reducing both vulnerability and targeting requirements against a Soviet nuclear threat. This would free up limited budget funds to permit the nation and the navy to prepare for what navy strategists had argued since 1954 was a more likely threat than nuclear conflict—limited war fostered by the Soviet Union or its surrogates against U.S. allies on the Eurasian periphery. The finite deterrence concept, while never implemented as national military strategy, guided the navy in its strategic planning for utilizing Polaris and also served as the basis of navy thinking about nuclear war for three decades.³⁷

During the 1980s, the Strategic Concepts Group (Op-603) of Op-60 was the focal point for the production of the Maritime Strategy briefing that became the best known manifestation of the concept inside the navy. Staffed by naval line officers who were part of the navy’s political-military planning brain trust, this organization produced four successive revisions of the briefing, each of which was circulated in written form throughout the service and beyond, building consensus for its basic concepts in the fleet, and generating controversy through presentations to the other U.S. armed services. Op-603 also took the lead in addressing strategic issues during the periodic “navy-to-navy” talks the CNO staff held with their opposite numbers in allied and friendly navies, and at Nato and other allied military meetings. This allowed the Maritime Strategy to be vetted before an international audience, and helped ensure the acceptance of the strategy’s basic concepts of forward defense and flexible response among European and Pacific allies.

Outside of Washington, the Chief of Naval Operations Strategic Studies Group (SSG) at the Naval War College provided a separate but parallel planning track. The SSG was not one group but successive collections of top-ranked officers from the air, surface, and submarine communities and the Marine Corps, appointed for one-year tours to study and report on strategic questions raised by the CNO and the fleet CinCs. Where Op-603 capitalized on the talents of the navy’s small pool of political-military specialists, the SSG exploited the synergy inherent in its amalgamation of front-runners in the warfare communities, many of whom were looking at naval strategy outside of their own career specialty for

³⁷ Rosenberg, “Arleigh Albert Burke,” pp. 292–305, and Rosenberg, “Origins of Overkill,” pp. 50–71.

the first time. The various incarnations of the SSG “acted like a small swarm of honeybees, migrating from one flag officer to another, discussing issues, exchanging views, and carrying the pollen of stimulating thought from one command to another.” The SSG experience brought further dividends as strategically “enlightened” alumni of the group returned to the fleet or to Washington and rose to flag rank and, by the early 1990s, top navy leadership posts.³⁸

These efforts, along with the evolving intelligence assessment of Soviet naval strategy, culminated with the explicit public disclosure of the Maritime Strategy in 1985–1986. In the spring of 1985, Op-603 sponsored a conference at the Naval War College where the strategy was briefed to, and debated by, a large group of defense academics. In June, Op-603’s briefing was explicitly tied for the first time to the 600-ship-navy program by Navy Secretary John Lehman, the CNO, Admiral James Watkins, and the Marine Commandant, General P.X. Kelley, in hearings before the House Armed Services Committee. Finally, in January 1986, the CNO, Admiral James D. Watkins, published “The Maritime Strategy,” as a valedictory statement prior to his retirement the following summer, in a special supplement to the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, accompanied by articles by Secretary Lehman on the 600-ship navy program and by General Kelley, amplifying the amphibious warfare aspects of the strategy. Watkins’ article was the most highly publicized version of the strategy, one which became a basis for subsequent comment and criticism. It contained the most explicit description of the strategy’s rationale and provided more information in its unclassified form about the sensitive mission of strategic antisubmarine warfare by U.S. SSNs against Soviet SSBNs in their Atlantic and Pacific bastions than had heretofore been included in Op-603’s classified briefings.³⁹

The “products” of the strategic planning process surrounding the Maritime Strategy served a number of purposes. One goal, epitomized by Op-603’s well-circulated briefing and the SSG’s more sensitive reports, was internal to the navy. This was to serve as a cross-fertilizing stimulus for war planners in the fleet headquarters and others concerned about the navy’s future ability to deal with what was perceived to be a very dangerous Soviet land, air, surface, and submarine threat. The second goal, represented by public statements about the strategy during 1982–1985, and more importantly by a series of major naval exercises between 1982 and 1989 in the North Atlantic, Western Pacific, and Eastern Mediterranean, was to impress upon the Soviet Union that the American

³⁸ Hattendorf, “Evolution of the Maritime Strategy,” pp. 15–25.

³⁹ The comment comparing the unclassified published version of the strategy with the classified briefing was made by a number of the author’s students in the Strategy and Operations courses at the Naval War College, 1986–1990. A sanitized version of the classified brief was unveiled in Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Seapower and Strategic and Critical Materials Subcommittee, House Armed Services Committee, *Hearings on the 600 Ship Navy and the Maritime Strategy* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1986), pp. 13–71.

navy was serious about pursuing its forward offensive strategy. The Soviets understood the implications of those statements and exercises more quickly than many Americans, who only began to comment in detail on the implications of forward operations of carrier battle groups and strategic ASW in Soviet home waters after Admiral Watkins' article was published. Whether the Soviet military was actually encouraged to follow a defensive strategy as the U.S. Navy intended will not be known until the Russian navy and General Staff archives are opened to scholars.⁴⁰ Finally, the strategy was used somewhat belatedly as a justification for continuing navy shipbuilding, aircraft procurement, and infrastructure construction programs. It is interesting that it was not publicly presented as a budget justification until 1985, just as the real growth of the Reagan defense buildup faltered.

The *structure, organization, and procedures of naval service-wide program and procurement planning* is the matériel-oriented complement to navy strategic planning. Program and procurement planning has traditionally been centered in the service's Washington headquarters, but until very recently has been more or less decentralized in form and function. The pre-1992 office of the CNO "barons" (deputy or assistant CNOs) in charge of the air, surface, and subsurface communities have generally prepared their own community mid-term master plans and annual "warfare appraisals" which were then "unified" in a navy budget plan, tied to the overall budget request of the Defense Department.

In the 1950s, the navy leadership, particularly the Chief of Naval Operations, had significant influence on, if not necessarily control over, the budget process. The service would be given a budget figure for the upcoming fiscal year by the President and the Secretary of Defense, and the navy leadership would then plan for the allocation of those funds in accord with their assessment of national and

⁴⁰ U.S. exercises are chronicled in Jacob Borreson, "U.S. Carrier Operations in the North Atlantic and the Norwegian Sea" in John Skogland and Arne Brundtland, *Soviet Sea Power in Northern Waters* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), pp. 107-20; and William J. Durch, "The U.S. Navy: Forces, Doctrines, Missions, and Arms Control" in Barry M. Blechman *et al.*, *The U.S. Stake in Naval Arms Control* (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1990), pp. 29-100. On Soviet reactions, see James T. Westwood, "Soviet Reaction to the Maritime Strategy" and David Alan Rosenberg, "'It Is Hardly Possible to Imagine Anything Worse': Soviet Thoughts on the Maritime Strategy" in *Naval War College Review*, XLI (Summer 1988), pp. 62-68 and 69-105; Captain 1st Rank Ye. Nikitin, "Old Postulates of A 'New Strategy,'" a series of four articles on the U.S. Navy in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and the Pacific, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 10, 12, and 19 (January 1989), translated in JPRS-UMA-89-007, 16 March 1989, pp. 57-58, JPRS-UMA-89-008, 3 April 1989, pp. 43-46, and JPRS-UMA-89-009, 20 April 1989, pp. 80-82; Yu. Lilin, "The U.S. Navy: Old Postulates of a 'New Naval Strategy'" *Morskoi Sbornik*, 2 (1989), pp. 65-70; and M. Boytsov, "Confrontational Thinking Has Not Been Eliminated" *Morskoi Sbornik* 10 (1989), pp. 65-70, and Captain 1st Rank V.M. Mikhaylov, "U.S. Naval Strategy" and Captain 1st Rank V.A. Galkovskiy, "On the Role of Naval Forces in International Relations," both in *Voyennaya Mysl*, 1 (January 1990), pp. 59-78. See also the map, "The Threat to the Motherland" presented by the Soviet General Staff head, Marshall of the Soviet Union Sergei Akhromayev, to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William J. Crowe, USN, in 1989. The large framed map outlining the threat presented by U.S. military, particularly naval, forces currently hangs outside the office of the Assistant to the Chairman of the JCS, Room 2E868, the Pentagon.

service requirements. Navy budget requests were reviewed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the White House, but that review was far from systematic, and usually only the largest individual expenditures (such as construction of an aircraft carrier, aircraft procurement figures, or programs for ship modernization) were challenged.⁴¹

During Burke's tour as CNO, navy program planning was used as a tool to chart the service's course over the long term as well as for the immediate future. A Long-Range Objectives Group (Op-93) was established in 1955–1956 to prepare statements of long-range objectives and requirements. The group was supported by a Naval Warfare Analysis Group, which, in late 1956, produced a key analysis of Polaris. It concluded that Polaris was best suited for a "national" deterrent mission, i.e., that its targets should be Soviet industry and cities rather than the "targets of naval interest" and theater support allowed carrier aviation under the 1948 Key West agreement.⁴²

This study was approved by Burke and helped ultimately to lead the CNO, by December 1957, to approve a force objective of forty SSBNs, each armed with sixteen Polaris missiles for "The Navy of the 1970 Era." That number was well in excess of a naval targets requirement. It was later raised to forty-five, with forty-one ultimately approved by the Kennedy administration. As noted above, summer and fall 1957 studies of future force levels prepared by Op-93 and OPNAV's Standing Committee on Shipbuilding and Conversion indicated that unless projected shipbuilding funds were increased significantly, the costs of Polaris and nuclear power would likely lead to a 1971 force level of 693 rather than the 927 active ships considered necessary to meet wartime challenges. Although some details of these assessments proved inaccurate, especially the ultimate numbers of nuclear-powered surface ships the U.S. would build, their essential judgments that navy force levels would have to decline proved correct.⁴³

By the 1980s, U.S. Navy active force levels had declined significantly from even the projections of the late 1950s, down to some 450 to 480 active ships. The process of program planning had also undergone significant changes. In the 1960s, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara had introduced the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) into the Defense Department, and

⁴¹ Hone, *Power and Change*, pp. 29–55.

⁴² Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," pp. 52–53; Rosenberg, "Arleigh Albert Burke," pp. 280–302; and David Alan Rosenberg, *Historical Perspectives in Long-Range Planning in the Navy* (Washington, D.C.: Naval Research Advisory Committee, September 1980, Released January 1981).

⁴³ Rear Admiral Rose, Memos for the CNO, 13 September and 13 December 1957; Study, "The Navy of the 1970 Era" transmitted by Memorandum, Admiral Arleigh Burke to Distribution List, Subject: Statement of U.S. Navy Long Range Objective, 1967–1972, Serial 04P93, 13 January 1958, published in Appendix A of Rosenberg, *Historical Perspectives in Long-Range Planning in the Navy*. A 1976 study by Op-90G, the General Planning Division of the Office of the CNO, indicated that by the end of Fiscal Year 1971, the active fleet force level had declined to 702 ships, and fell further to 654 the following year and to 496 by the end of Fiscal Year 1974, Chart, "Historical Data-Active Fleet Levels (By Fiscal Year)" Op-902G2, 1 March 1976, Author's Files.

had used the expanded powers granted him by the National Security Act Amendments of 1958 to rigorously analyze and question the services' program objectives. The CNO's ability to personally direct the development of overall navy programs was seriously curtailed both by the McNamara reforms and by the growth of the so-called air, surface, and submarine "unions" within the navy.

Although navy program planning was subject to many internal and external pressures by the 1970s, it still had great potential for shaping the service's future direction. Changes in either the size or mix of ship and aircraft types in future force structure would profoundly affect patterns of operations and strategy. During the 1970s, planners in the Systems Analysis Division (Op-96) prepared studies of "how to size a navy" which had considered alternative force levels of 500, 600, 700, and 800 ships. Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, the CNO from 1970 to 1974, had seen a fleet of 770 ships as the minimum needed to meet national security requirements. The Ford administration had agreed to a goal of 600 ships for the 1980s in 1975.⁴⁴

The question of what such a fleet should look like was strongly debated inside the navy and out. In 1977, the National Security Council undertook an analysis of U.S. military strategy which pessimistically concluded that, based on its assumptions about war initiation and the conventional force balance, a Europe-centered general war with the Soviet Union in the foreseeable future was bound to be short, too short for naval forces to have an impact on the land campaign. Hence, the nation's maritime needs required a force of only ten carrier battle groups, with a strategy built around defensive barrier operations to protect the Atlantic SLOC.⁴⁵

That same year, the Extended Planning Branch (Op-965) of Op-96 began work on an "Alternative Battle Group Concepts Study" designed to examine force structure alternatives out to the turn of the century. Some of the conceptual platforms examined included high-length-to-beam surface effects ships, large SWATH-type ships, and smaller VSTOL-type carriers. The study raised the heretofore unimagined specter of a navy transitioning to a time without big deck aircraft carriers. It rejected change "merely for the sake of applying 'more modern' techniques and technology to traditional naval roles," however, in large part because the technology necessary to "produce and field many of the more promising future alternative sea-based air (or missile) platforms" did not yet exist.⁴⁶

During 1977–1978, "Sea Plan 2000," a Secretary of the Navy-mandated study was prepared at the Naval War College at the reluctant behest of the Carter administration Defense Department. It examined the potential impact on

⁴⁴ William W. Kaufmann, *A Thoroughly Efficient Navy* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1987), pp. 6–7; Hattendorf, "Evolution of the Maritime Strategy," pp. 10–11.

⁴⁵ Hartmann, *Naval Renaissance*, pp. 24–27.

⁴⁶ Woodall, "Strategic Forecasting in Long-Range Military Force Planning," pp. 356–62.

near-term national security of three naval force levels. The first involved 439 ships, 10 carriers, 10 Aegis ships, and 80 SSNs, and the second 535 ships, 12 CVs, 24 Aegis ships, and 94 SSNs. It ultimately advocated a "lower risk navy" of 585 ships, 14 CVs, 28 Aegis CGs and 98 SSNs. This option required sustained 4 percent real growth in the navy budget in the 1980s. In contrast with the Alternative Battle Group Study, which had considered radical change but had rejected it for the time being, Sea Plan 2000 backed the most conservative force option and was criticized as merely espousing "established wisdom." The lower risk navy served as a something of a blueprint for the 600-ship, 15-CV, 100-SSN navy of the Reagan administration.⁴⁷

It was the Reagan administration's increases in defense spending which made the 600-ship navy possible. Defense budget authority increased by an annual average of 9.3 percent from fiscal years 1981 to 1985, while actual outlays increased an average of 6.8 percent each year from 1981 to 1986. The U.S. Navy's force levels grew from 479 in 1980 to 565 in 1988. Four nuclear aircraft carriers, 28 Aegis cruisers and destroyers, 6 SSBNs, and 24 SSNs were authorized through fiscal year 1988. Total numbers of aircraft authorized grew from 4,436 in 1980 to 5,012 in 1988. But budget growth ceased with fiscal year 1986.⁴⁸

The Reagan buildup remedied many of the deficiencies caused by the decline of the fleet in the 1970s. The fleet that was built, with the exception of the Aegis ships and the Tomahawk land attack and antiship cruise missile, was not generally perceived as innovative, but the qualitative and quantitative increase in capability, combined with new tactical concepts and dispositions, was sufficient to give fleet commanders the confidence that they could go into harm's way, survive, and prevail. Critics questioned whether the 600-ship navy was sized and constituted adequately to address the missions laid out in the Maritime Strategy. This is a question which may prove impossible to answer, since the Soviet economic collapse and the end of the Cold War eliminated the strategic challenge the fleet and the strategy were designed to address. The fact that the Reagan administration's defense budget growth ended in 1986, before the Soviet collapse, tends to validate the projections of Op 965's 1982 Extended Planning Annex that the 600-ship 15-carrier navy would be difficult to attain and probably impossible to sustain into the 1990s. If the Cold War had continued, and the navy once more found itself with a declining fleet, implementation of the Maritime Strategy may well have proved increasingly problematic.

⁴⁷ Unclassified Executive Summary, "Sea Plan 2000" 1978; Hartmann, *Naval Renaissance*, pp. 27-33.

⁴⁸ Budget figures on the Reagan defense buildup may be found in Daniel Wirls, *Buildup, The Politics of Defense in the Reagan Era* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 35-42. The increase in active navy force levels is shown in Office of the Navy Comptroller, "Budgets and Forces Summary," NAVSO P-3523, 31 March 1992, while individual ship construction was derived from the U.S. Navy section of Bernard Prezelin and A.D. Baker III, eds., *The Naval Institute Guide to Combat Fleets of the World 1993* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1992), pp. 782-944.

The next two factors focus on the actual matériel elements navy program planners must work with. These are *the state of research and development progress of a nation's naval warfare technology* and *the state of the national scientific and industrial infrastructure for research, development, and production of naval warfare technology*. Both underwent considerable change between the 1950s and 1980s. In the 1950s, the United States was riding the crest of the wave of industrial mobilization and scientific and technological innovation which had begun in World War II. This surge of change included nuclear technology for weapons and propulsion, electronics for radar, sonar, and communications systems, fuels for propelling aircraft and missiles, and guidance system technology for rockets and missiles. When the Polaris program started in 1955, the concept initially looked to deploying a large, liquid-fueled missile with a comparatively large nuclear warhead on a surface ship. Submarine basing was regarded as an option, but it was considered problematic because of the size of the missile and the volatility of its fuel. Initial designs anticipated that no more than four of the large missiles could be carried by a single submarine. By the summer of 1956, however, technological projections had changed dramatically. Innovations promised to greatly reduce warhead size and weight, and more stable and efficient solid fuels were also under development. Buoyed by the swell of advancing technology, it took just five years from the time the Special Projects Office (SPO) was tasked with developing a fleet ballistic missile in November 1955 until the first Polaris SSBN, USS *George Washington*, departed on the first undersea deterrent patrol. Contracts were let to four U.S. shipyards to construct the 41 SSBNs in the Polaris force. These yards accomplished their formidable task in less than a decade: the first ship was laid down in November 1957, while the last, USS *Will Rogers*, was commissioned in April 1967.⁴⁹

By the 1980s, the American capability to rapidly produce technologically innovative naval weapon systems ships had significantly declined. The concept of a follow-on SSBN was raised in the Department of Defense Strat-X study in 1967–1968, and the Undersea Long Range Missile System program was established by the Chief of Naval Operations in 1969. The weapon system, now renamed Trident, was approved for development in May 1972, and the first submarine was ordered in July 1974. The first new SSBN, USS *Ohio*, was not laid down until April 1976, and not commissioned until November 1981, twelve years after the program was begun. There was now only one shipyard prepared to produce SSBNs. Trident missile development moved only somewhat more quickly, with the first development contract awarded in 1971, and the first missile sent on patrol in a backfitted Poseidon submarine in 1979. Similar delays have plagued other navy R&D and construction programs in the 1970s and 1980s.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Information on Polaris development is derived from Sapolsky, *Polaris System Development*, pp. 61–229, and U.S. Navy Strategic Systems Programs, *FBM Facts/Chronology, Polaris-Poseidon-Trident*, pp. 4–28.

⁵⁰ *FBM Facts/Chronology*, pp. 32–59. A concise overview of how warships were designed and constructed in the early 1980s may be found in Breemer, *U.S. Naval Developments*, pp. 61–72.

In contrast to their predecessors in World War II or the 1950s, navy leaders had to accept the necessity for enormous lead times in planning for changes in the physical make up and capabilities of the fleet.

The final internal factor affecting navy strategy-making is the *character and personalities of naval service national leadership*. Key individuals often make the difference in whether a program is developed or a plan is implemented. Just as Admiral Sir John Fisher was critical to the process that led to the construction of HMS *Dreadnought* and the battle cruiser in Corbett and Richmond's day, so too was Arleigh Burke to the decision to begin the Polaris program. Other key people made the project work, particularly Rear Admiral William F. Raborn, whom Burke appointed to head the Special Projects Office, and Rear Admiral Hyman Rickover, who oversaw nuclear submarine development and construction. While a U.S. ballistic missile submarine would eventually have come into being without Burke, Raborn, or Rickover, its revolutionary impact on naval and national strategy might have been considerably diluted. Burke had the vision of the role Polaris could play in national defense; Raborn and his team saw that Polaris development deadlines were met utilizing cutting edge technology; and Rickover and his naval reactors branch set standards for performance and safety which ensured outstanding performance. Similarly, Admiral of the Fleet Sergei Gorshkov of the Soviet navy was a key player. Although his role is more difficult to study, he appears to have had as much if not more influence than his American counterparts in shaping the ballistic missile era of naval strategy.⁵¹

When considering naval leaders in the 1980s, however, critical personalities are more difficult to identify. There is no one single individual responsible for the creation of the Maritime Strategy. Although Admiral Watkins' name has been most closely identified with it, because of his article in the *Naval Institute Proceedings*, he did not initiate the series of studies and presentations that first gave form to the strategic concept. Some of the action officers who worked on the strategy were critical in establishing its form, and clearly explicating its purpose, so that the concept could win support inside the navy and out. Two of these, Captains Roger Barnett and Peter Swartz, were most persuasive and innovative thinkers and writers who were crucial in getting Op-603's brief through the navy high command to circulation throughout the fleet.⁵²

⁵¹ Rosenberg, "Arleigh Albert Burke"; Sapolsky, *Polaris System Development*; Duncan, *Rickover and the Nuclear Navy*, pp. 17-51; Richard G. Hewlett and Francis Duncan, *Nuclear Navy, 1946-1962* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 297-391. So far as the author is aware, there is no full scale English or Russian language assessment of Admiral Gorshkov's role. His importance can readily be seen from Robert Herrick, *Soviet Naval Strategy, Fifty Years of Theory and Practice* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1968); Bryan Ranft and Geoffrey Till, *The Sea in Soviet Strategy* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, second edition 1989); and Michael McGwire, "Gorshkov's Navy", Parts I and II, U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, 115 (August 1989), pp. 44-51 and September 1989, pp. 42-47.

⁵² Hattendorf, "Evolution of the Maritime Strategy," pp. 18-23, and comments on an earlier draft of this essay by Captain Larry Seaquist, December 1992.

It is arguable as to whether there was one single *indispensable* individual responsible for the creation of the Maritime Strategy within the naval establishment. Secretary of the Navy John Lehman probably comes closest in the view of some participants, but he remains a most controversial individual, and the final verdict on his role will require more time to pass and greater access to navy files than currently exists. Lehman certainly was a leading advocate for maritime strategy in general, as well as “the” Maritime Strategy, and his 1981 demands on the Office of the CNO for a strategy statement did serve to spark the process. Perhaps equally important, Lehman’s efforts to reform the contracting and procurement process for ships and aircraft and his effective lobbying with Congress on behalf of the 600-ship navy program were critical to the increase in American naval capability in the 1980s.⁵³

Interestingly, the single most critical personality during this era of naval strategy making may have been Admiral Rickover, whose influence acted more as a brake than an engine. Rickover’s emphasis on improving naval officers’ engineering mastery, which spread throughout the fleet in the 1970s, served to distract attention from, if not actively discourage serious consideration of, strategic issues and challenges. Rickover’s forced retirement in 1982 may have freed much of the service’s uniformed leadership from the “kindly old gentleman’s” authority. One wonders what his impact might have been on the strategy-making process if he had remained on active duty until his death in 1986.⁵⁴

Since navy strategy making occurs within the larger context of national strategy, an analysis of the process must also take into account such factors as *the structure, organization, and procedures of national strategic military planning; the structure, organizations, and procedures of national program and procurement planning; and the character and personalities of national defense leadership.*

National strategic military planning is the province of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the headquarters staffs of the unified theater and specified force commanders. The Chief of Naval Operations has been a member of the JCS since 1942, while navy admirals serving as theater and fleet CinCs all fall under the JCS Unified Command Plan. The JCS have mandated the production of a series of documents to guide contingency and requirements planning since 1949. Although the names of these documents have tended to change over time, there are two basic products. The first is a capabilities plan, designed to prioritize tasks to be accomplished by existing forces in the event of hostilities. The second is a requirements plan which establishes the types and number of military forces the

⁵³ Captain Peter Swartz’s comments on an earlier draft of this essay, December 1992; Lehman, *Command of the Seas*, pp. 115–95. An alternate account, which puts much less stress on Lehman’s influence may be found in Hartmann, *Naval Renaissance*, pp. 87–217.

⁵⁴ See in particular, Polmar and Allen, *Rickover*, pp. 294–59, and Lehman, *Command of the Seas*, pp. 19–38.

United States would need to meet a variety of contingencies into the mid-term future.

During the 1950s, each of these products was the subject of fierce interservice battles over strategic concepts, roles and missions, force composition, and overall force levels. The navy's finite deterrence concept and the arrangements for command and control of the Polaris system were both hot topics of JCS debate. The fact that finite deterrence was not accepted as a replacement for existing national nuclear targeting and employment strategy resulted in the SSBN being defined as one leg of a triad, not the dominant alternative force Burke had envisioned.⁵⁵

The capabilities and requirements plans continued to be produced into the 1980s. The requirements plan grew increasingly irrelevant from the late 1950s on, because the force levels the JCS identified as necessary to adequately if not comfortably defend American interests in a global conflict were unrealistically large, undermining JCS credibility, while responsibility for force level planning and programming was increasingly taken over by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The JCS requirements plans of the 1980s were essentially irrelevant to the Maritime Strategy and the 600-ship navy; the 1982 JCS "Planning Force" called for 16 "big deck" and 6 "medium deck" carrier battle groups.⁵⁶ The capabilities plan remained important in that it established tasks that the Maritime Strategy, as "the maritime component of the national military strategy," was designed to accomplish.

The structure for national program and procurement planning played a significant role in the Polaris and Maritime Strategy initiatives. In both cases, the national structure was such that it allowed the navy to retain autonomy over the preparation of its internal budget and programs. That autonomy gave impetus for these initiatives. Further, in each case, the navy's proposed building programs were incorporated into the Defense Department budgets at a time when military budgets were expanding. Polaris was developed during the Eisenhower years when a cap was placed on overall defense expenditures. Only nineteen of the forty to forty-five SSBNs the navy had proposed were approved for construction before the Eisenhower administration. It was the Kennedy administration that accelerated the SSBN building program, allowing it to reach 41 boats by 1967. Secretary McNamara's analyses put a premium on hard-to-target strategic nuclear forces as well as, for a time, increased navy conventional forces in support of the administration's policy of "flexible response." Navy program initiatives

⁵⁵ Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," pp. 9–11, 50–71. See also Historical Division, Joint Secretariat, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Chronology of JCS Organization, 1945–1984* (Washington: Joint Secretariat, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1984), various editions of the *Joint Staff Officer's Guide*, and the declassified and unclassified JCS Memoranda of Policy relating to strategic planning from 1949 through the 1980s.

⁵⁶ The JCS Planning Force is described in the declassified "Extended Planning Annex to POM-84."

introduced during a period of static or declining funding in the 1960s and 1970s faced much stiffer opposition.

As noted above, the Reagan administration significantly increased the size of the defense budget in the early 1980s. In addition, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger determined that the service secretaries should have increased authority for recommending changes in their service's programs, and that the JCS should play a larger role in the budgeting process as well. Until larger economic and political factors ended the era of real growth in the defense budget in the mid-1980s, national military program planning procedures did little to shape and did much to help rather than inhibit the growth of the 600-ship navy.⁵⁷

The national defense leadership includes the President of the United States, the additional civilian officials (including vice president, the secretary of state and the secretary of defense) who make up the National Security Council (NSC), the president's national security adviser, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretaries of Defense for Policy and Acquisition, the various Assistant Defense Secretaries, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. National security advisers strongly shaped the overall policy process in the 1960s and 1970s, while individual cabinet and subcabinet officers have wielded significant power when their bosses have chosen to delegate it. Activist defense secretaries such as Robert McNamara, Melvin Laird, James Schlesinger, and Harold Brown have played truly historic roles.⁵⁸

Interestingly, however, in the two cases we are concerned with here, the president had the greatest influence on the strategy-making process. President Eisenhower was strongly committed to holding the line on defense expenditures, but he was also determined to see that the United States would not fall behind the Soviet Union in military technology. His willingness to accept the recommendations of the 1955 Report of the Technological Capabilities Panel of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (the Killian Report) regarding intercontinental and intermediate range ballistic missiles provided the national policy basis for the Polaris program. His decision to accelerate national missile programs after the 1957 launch of *Sputnik* led to the early deployment of Polaris at sea. President Reagan's commitment to building up U.S. military forces, his acceptance of the Republican Party's 1980 Platform endorsement of the 600-ship navy program, and his 1982 speech backing "maritime superiority" as a national security necessity virtually ensured that the navy's ambitious plans would go forward with little executive branch opposition. It should be noted, however,

⁵⁷ Wiris, *Buildup*, pp. 31–55, 168–226; Caspar W. Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace* (New York: Warner Books, 1990), pp. 39–79.

⁵⁸ The best overview of the role of the Secretary of Defense remains Douglas Kinnard, *The Secretary of Defense* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1980). A solid short history may be found in Roger Trask, *The Secretaries of Defense, A Brief History, 1947–1985* (Washington: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1985).

that Navy Secretary Lehman was a critical behind-the-scenes factor in both the party platform and the 1982 speech.⁵⁹

The character and structure of the national political system as it relates to defense issues is also a factor. Not only the executive branch but Congress determines the character of the nation's military programs and strategy. Successive chairmen of the House Armed Services Committee—men such as Carl Vinson, Mendel Rivers of South Carolina, and F. Edward Hebert of Louisiana—have long played a key role, pushing navy programs and determining much of the service's base structure. The congressional role in questioning and explicitly shaping defense policy intensified after Vietnam and the Watergate scandal. Congressional staffs increased in size and influence, new legislative staff institutions such as the Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Technology Assessment were created, studies and reports requested by Congress grew from 36 in 1970 to 719 in 1988, and the number of defense programs adjusted by the House and Senate during the authorization and appropriations process went from 850 in 1970 to more than 3,000 in 1988.⁶⁰ Navy leaders had to expend considerable time and effort responding to congressional scrutiny to win support for its programs.

The summer 1985 House Armed Services Committee hearings on "The 600 Ship Navy and the Maritime Strategy" were a critical test. Ultimately, Congressman Charles Bennett's Seapower Subcommittee concluded that "the maritime strategy provides a better naval deterrent to Soviet aggression than the more limited, defensively oriented alternatives the subcommittee considered," and that "the 600 ship Navy as currently described is a reasonable and balanced approach to meeting the force structure requirements of that strategy."⁶¹ Just how the navy prepared for those hearings, and what behind the scenes maneuvering occurred in producing the subcommittee report, would be a fascinating case study.

The final factor for consideration in the naval strategy-making process is *the character, structure, and status of national financial and economic systems as they relate to national defense*. Analysis of this factor is more than an exercise in economic determinism. The relationship between the overall economy and the military budget is a complex and interactive one. Projections of how much defense spending the economy could support have frequently proven to be too low, as

⁵⁹ Eisenhower's decisions are discussed in Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," pp. 38–49. On Reagan's decisions and defense program, see Lehman, *Command of the Seas*, pp. 93–155.

⁶⁰ Barry M. Blechman, *The Politics of National Security, Congress and U.S. Defense Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 23–62. The only study to explicitly examine the relationship between the navy and Congress in the postwar period is James Pressley Craft, Jr., "The Role of Congress in the Determination of Naval Strategy in Support of United States Foreign Policy, 1956–1966" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1969).

⁶¹ Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, Seapower and Strategic and Critical Materials Subcommittee, House Armed Services Committee, *Report on the 600 Ship Navy, December 1985* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1986), pp. iii. See also Hartmann, *Naval Renaissance*, pp. 48–164.

in the Eisenhower years when the President feared that a long-term increase in the military budget might lead to a “garrison state.” During the Kennedy years, the defense budget grew significantly and was much higher than many believed advisable, with few apparent ill effects. Lyndon Johnson’s corresponding budget increases for both the Vietnam War and domestic programs contributed to the inflationary dislocation of the 1970s.

Such periods of economic weakness can be a serious inhibiting factor. In the 1970s, with inflation at double-digit levels, navy planners estimated that they were losing thirty percent of their procurement programs in the Five Year Defense Plan to the increasing costs associated with the inflationary spiral. The Reagan military buildup and its initiative to build a 600-ship navy was denounced in some quarters as too expensive to be sustained by the U.S. economy and financial system. Historians will have to assess not only how such predictions may have affected the program, but whether they were accurate, especially considering the growth of the federal budget deficit in the 1980s, the nation’s economic health at the end of the decade, and prospects for future defense spending.⁶²

Conclusions

An enormous amount of work remains to be done in the history of navy strategy making. The seventeen factors identified here could, individually or in combination, be the basis of a monograph on the U.S. Navy in the postwar period, or on other navies, or other military services in other periods of history. The list is, of course, not intended to be universally applicable. It is tailored to naval history, and reflects a single service bias. Analysis of strategy making for joint or combined operations would require generally parallel lists of similar and additional factors for other services or the armed services of other nations. In addition, this list is oriented toward strategy making in a long peace, not toward wartime interaction which occurs within a much shorter time frame.

One final comment needs to be made about the strategy-making process, as a word of warning to the unwary. The strategy-making process discourse in the U.S. Navy occurs in four different forums, each with its own problems of documentation and interpretation. There is, on the top layer, where it is most visible, what the admirals say to Congress and the public. This is a combination of official open statements and papers on specific defense issues, congressional testimony, and personal interviews with both the general news media and more

⁶² Economic analyses of recent military history are rare and valuable. Stephen Woodall’s dissertation, “Strategic Forecasting in Long-Range Military Force Planning,” discusses many methodological issues relating to fiscally constrained military planning which might have utility for historians of contemporary strategy. A more problematic, yet interesting study is Philip Pugh, *The Cost of Seapower, The Influence of Money on Naval Affairs from 1815 to the Present Day* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1986).

specialized defense publications. One step removed from the public view is what the admirals say in official and often classified communications to the JCS and OSD. Here is where policy is often most explicitly enunciated. The next level is usually for navy eyes and ears only: what the admirals tell their action officers when they order them to prepare various papers and projects, and what the action officers say to each other as they carry out their orders. Here is where working papers and original directives are the basic means of communication. Finally, at the very heart of this structure is what the admirals say only among themselves. This usually takes place in face-to-face meetings or else through personal correspondence and SPECAT/PERSONAL message traffic.

The first two layers are relatively easy to document, once the relevant records have been declassified. The latter two are increasingly problematic and possibly inaccessible to historians. Working papers are often destroyed once a project has been completed. Sensitive personal messages and communications are often burned to avoid their being subject to future misinterpretation by journalists. The message traffic that is retained is usually kept on long rolls of microfilm with no index beyond the message's classification and date-time group. Oral histories and taped interviews made soon after the event can provide some critical insights; so too can published memoirs built on diaries and memoranda as well as recollections. Yet the true history of the way the naval service works on a problem can be fully understood only with access to the these inner-most layers of the process.

It is all too easy for historians to approach the history of strategy as a branch of intellectual history, to analyze ideas and concepts abstracted from their hidden roots. But as Corbett and Richmond warned so many years ago, it is only possible to understand naval strategy in the context of navies, as they actually function in all their complexity and mystery. This is even more true of the postwar period than it was eighty years ago. At that time, there were intellectuals like Richmond, Corbett, and Mahan who formulated and articulated naval strategy in terms the layman could understand. There are no such prophets for the postwar period, with the possible exception of Admiral Gorshkov. The 1950s and 1960s were the heyday of the so-called "first generation" of civilian nuclear strategists. Yet, neither Polaris nor the Soviet SSBN were the products of civilian defense intellectuals. In the United States in fact, most of those intellectuals worked for the Rand Corporation, and as Air Force contractors a number of them worked to discredit the potential contributions of the SSBN weapon system. The greater involvement of American defense intellectuals with the army and the air force stands in contrast to the navy, which has rarely gone outside of its uniformed ranks to find a voice to articulate its assumptions and strategic concepts to the world at large.⁶³

⁶³ On the role of the civilian nuclear strategists, see Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), and Gregg Herken, *Counsels of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

These assumptions and concepts are difficult for an outsider to understand and explain. The process of naval strategy making is not a mechanistic dynamic, but an organic one; one that is not easily captured by flow charts. It rests more on operational experience or programmatic realities (often classified, obscure, complex, and poorly articulated) than on readily definable theory. This makes the process hard to track and even harder to describe.

A solid understanding of recent history might make this problem more manageable. But even naval officers are generally not well versed in their own recent institutional history. The army and air force have invested in a corps of officer academics trained in history and the social sciences to teach at their service academies and war colleges and assist in their high-level planning. The Office of Air Force History has a special branch in the Pentagon where civilian scholars serve periodic tours of duty chronicling and providing historical support to air force policy-making. The Joint Chiefs of Staff maintain a small but very active group of historians concerned with supplying not just extensive staff histories but also historical perspective on current developments.

The navy, on the other hand, has chosen to use civilian academics to teach history and strategy at the Naval Academy, Postgraduate School, and War College. These professors rarely if ever are afforded a look at how high-level uniformed decision making is actually done. A Contemporary History Branch, staffed by civilians, has been established at the Naval Historical Center, and has produced some impressive monographs on post-World War II naval history. Branch personnel have voluntarily provided support to action officers engaged in recent planning efforts, but their access to top policymakers has been extremely limited. The Center for Naval Analyses has also, building on its heavy operations analysis experience, selectively examined aspects of the service's recent history, but their access to top-level decision making has likewise been restricted and their work has not had wide service or public distribution.

The absence of a historical context in navy strategy making may be more marked than in the other services, but the difference is a matter of degree. In the Pentagon, in general, history is what happened last week rather than last year or last decade. Little effort is made to maintain institutional memories. Those that do play such a role are generally untrained in historical process, have arrived at their position by being the longest-lived civilian employee in their respective offices, and often have shallow or narrow perspectives. Solid historical record-keeping and analysis would help enlarge decision makers' perspectives on current issues. Increasing the access of official historians to the various levels of the decision-making process would, in turn, produce better history which ultimately might serve to make the navy more comprehensible to both outsiders and itself. The present navy historical system must be expanded and reorganized, however, if it is to serve as both an effective resource for policymakers and an effective chronicler of contemporary events.

Historians thus must reconstruct what the naval officer never knew, not just in battle as Richmond advised, but in the broader context of creating and maintaining a modern navy. The frontier for naval historians inside and outside government service lies in identifying and then integrating all the elements—technical, organizational, operational, political, and economic—which fundamentally shape strategy making. Context is all-important in evaluating strategy and statements about strategy. Technology, bureaucracy, professional training, and economics are all parts of this context. Not until scholars have undertaken the kind of detailed investigations of context outlined here will it be possible to write the overall history of naval strategy, based on an in-depth understanding of the processes that produced it.

Discussion of the Papers Written by Dr. Jon Sumida and Dr. David Rosenberg

W.A.B. Douglas: Good morning gentlemen. I was going to say ladies and gentlemen, but I see that we are probably short in this period; I do not see a lady present. It is my great pleasure to be presiding over this session this morning. When we were preparing to come down here, a senior Canadian officer showed some surprise at the number of Canadians who are present here and this suggests, perhaps, that senior Canadian officers do not read everything that Canadian historians write. The interesting thing is that there are two British historians of naval theorists here, who have received as much or more attention in North America than they have in Britain.

It was my experience as a sub-lieutenant in the happy days, when the Canadians and Australians took their sub-lieutenants' qualifying courses with the Royal Navy, that the North Americans and Australians in the group were always the troublemakers. I think we can say today in this particular field that the North Americans and the Australians are still the troublemakers. We have here, too—I do not know if we call them young Turks—young Americans who are well known for being controversial and very respected in their fields.

Jon Sumida: I want to start off with a little personal anecdote. About five years ago I was in a used bookstore in Bethesda, Maryland, where I noticed Alfred Thayer Mahan's *Naval Strategy*, which I didn't have. I immediately plunked down my \$75, brought it home, and upon opening the cover found the inscription: "To Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce with grateful recollection and cordial regards of the author." This was remarkable, for here was Mahan's presentation copy to his mentor and patron. This was not, however, the only surprise. As I turned the pages I discovered that they were uncut—Luce, it seemed, didn't read this stuff either. I'll use that as my introduction to my exploration of the question of what is the influence of historical writing or historically based strategic theory on the making of policy or the discussion of policy.

It is very difficult to prove the specific influence of history or theory on policy. I thus retreated to what I thought was a simpler problem that could be evaluated on the basis of the evidence that I had, namely, Sir Julian Corbett's analytical writing about a specific issue. I thought that if I could look at how he used history to talk about a particular question in which there were exchanges with others, I could get at this matter of the function of historians in what might be called

the real world. By this means, I hoped, I could address the question of whether historians could play a useful role in the formulation of policy.

Before considering this, it is worth exploring the possibility that in spite of obvious shared interests, historians and naval officers may be incapable of communicating to productive purpose. Another way of describing the situation would be to say that getting naval historians and naval officers to integrate their separate analyses of a problem is like trying to achieve binocular vision by having two one-eyed people describe the same object. This is perhaps because of a conflict of intellectual perspective of the kind described by John Keegan in *The Face of Battle*. In this book, Keegan pointed out that officers undergoing training at Sandhurst were, in fact, involved simultaneously in two diametrically opposed approaches to education. The first was professional education, which was about a single perspective whose clarity distorted reality in order to inculcate the capacity to perform difficult tasks in war. The second was general education, which involved the presentation of multiple perspectives in which a great deal of imprecision and approximation was accepted in order to consider what might be called truth.

On the assumption that the productive association of historians and naval officers is possible in matters of policy, the original question, restated in its simplest form, "can history influence policy?" really requires the asking of additional questions: What kind of policy? What kind of policymaker? What kind of history? And what kind of historian? These questions bring us to the particular case of Julian Corbett.

Corbett wrote about strategy in primarily operational terms. In the real world, however, technology and administration, among other things, are critical parts of many kinds of decisionmaking that we consider strategy formulation. Strategy in many cases can be seen, therefore, as a multidimensional or multilevel problem-solving process, whose ultimate goal might be the effective deployment of naval force, but whose nature is such as to make it not always amendable to being guided by strategic principles derived from the study of operations. If this is the case, then a strategic historian's general conclusions about operational history may not be an appropriate guide to naval officers involved in policy formulation in which technical, administrative, or other non-operational factors have important influence. This is not to say that Corbett's work is irrelevant or not useful, but to observe that while he demonstrated the value of sophisticated reasoning based on historical reflection at a time when simple-minded argument was generating problems of its own, his work does not represent a final solution to the problem of history and policy. Corbett's approach, I would argue, is a halfway house, which should serve in the present as a point of departure rather than as a definitive model.

In conclusion, let me emphasize several points. First, that much of what is called naval strategy involves multilayered decisionmaking and that some of these

layers include nonoperational matters that have not been adequately considered by most historians of naval strategy and policy. Second, that to take such factors into account where appropriate will require new intellectual tools and a great deal more basic research in documents. Third, that the tendency to find fault with naval officers and policymakers for not taking heed of the findings of strategic historians may be misplaced. To elaborate, it is perhaps the historians, and not the naval officers and policymakers who are the problem, because the former have not produced the kind of work required by the latter. Insofar as the immediate future is concerned, a good starting point for the addressing of the issues just described might be for naval officers to prompt historians with some intelligent questions. With a little luck, a lot more work, and time, historians might then be able to provide, if not serviceable answers, perhaps intelligent questions of their own that could serve as the basis for further inquiry.

David Rosenberg: The question is, should historians heed Corbett's warning to heed the distinction between scholarship and seamanship and steer clear of the latter? I refer you, of course, to Professor Sumida's paper on the likely origins of Sir Julian Corbett's statement. Further, should they seek to understand navies from the point of view of the expert in the services? Isn't that their job, taking seamanship, or in today's terms, all manner of naval technical expertise into account?

Turning to Richmond's views on naval history, from the naval officer's point of view. Richmond provided us with a set of statements which I found quite provocative. What we want is a picture of the conflicting elements which an admiral had before him. Let us see him, in the middle of his distractions, point out to us the information or the lack of information he had on which to act. So far as is possible, put us in a position and make us think what we ourselves would have done. This will give us a true idea of war. War as it really is, with a drawn curtain hiding the enemy's movements. Criticism of what a commander did, should be, if it is to be of any value to a student, based on the information that commander had at the time and not information placed subsequently at our disposal.

In order to understand combat decisions, it is important to set aside the admissions of hindsight and consider things from the point of view of the people making them. The development and implementation of large-scale plans, whether in peace or war, is another matter. The making of naval strategy is not a simple exercise in logic, nor the result of a single commander's choices. The complex interaction of forces can be explained, analyzed, and understood only in hindsight, and I think that Richmond noted and understood this well.

The administrative structure, operational doctrine, strategic plans, and command and control organization of tactical units beyond individual ships, including as appropriate, squadrons, flotillas, task groups, task forces' task fleets, and

regional command and fleets are obvious points for consideration. In addition, there are the sources of intelligence information, including their nature, their quality, and their frequency; the character of intelligence production, analysis and the dissemination of intelligence products and the structure, organization and procedures of naval service-wide strategic planning plan. In many cases, given that we are talking about national headquarters, this has often been considered part and parcel of the same problem, and I would argue that it is not. The time frames that the individuals in these positions and in these offices are dealing with are different. Those who deal with strategy on a day-to-day basis, those who deal with war plans, are more often than not worried about the immediate future. On the other hand, those who deal with programs and procurement end up thinking many, many years ahead. Ships last a long time. War plans do not survive contact with the enemy; each problem requires a different approach. The organizations are put together differently. The paperwork is an immense problem for historians to work through, but both of these matters have to be, in fact, analyzed as separate parts of the problem. Add to these factors the state of research and development progress, or the nation's naval warfare technology.

What is out there that we do not know about with respect to what is happening inside the bureaucracy? How is science moving along? How is it organized? What is the state of the national scientific and industrial infrastructure for research development and production of naval warfare technology? By this, I mean, were there among other things, enough shipyards capable of building the ships that were in the minds of the admirals who were putting together the programs? Moreover, were there enough laboratories available to undertake the development of the technology that was being contemplated? And of course there are the character and personalities of naval service national leadership: It is in this last set of factors, narrowly defined, that we have, I would argue, the basis for naval history as written in *Sea Kings of Britain* and much of the Naval Academy's approach to naval history. This emphasis on personalities is where we have been living with naval history for many years.

Vice-Admiral Daniel Mainguy: I find that I relate very closely to what Professor Rosenberg said. I thought I might spend just one minute talking about my own experience in taking strategic thought and turning it into the naval program. We could go back to 1975 when, in Canada, we were at a nadir. Peace had broken out; our Prime Minister was emphatically anti-armed forces. He had recently had a little bit of a shock. He had just been thrown out of Europe because Mr. Helmut Kohl told him that the road to Europe was paved with tanks, and so they were making a decision to buy some tanks in order to keep open the route to Europe. We were told to get on with a naval program and there simply wasn't one. There were a zillion ideas. We were told to build sovereignty ships, that

was all we really needed. We were told to build small and many ships. We were told to build almost anything. We were told to forget anything that was war-like, and the nature of the game, therefore, was to focus the navy and the rest of the government along a route.

Whether we did the right thing is another question, but we set about doing studies and we were able to show, for example, that, providing that general purposefulness was probably as good a bet as anything, and by the time you put a bit of air defense, a bit of antisubmarine warfare, a bit of surface warfare, some sensors and a helicopter in a ship, you had something that looked awfully like a frigate, which was the big no-no we were told to forget. We absolutely, unashamedly used the work of historians or anybody else that we could get to try and focus the attention of the government on this. It did indeed succeed. That work of 1975 has resulted in the first of the ships and aircraft that are just starting to come into service in 1992. So, only a comment to say that I relate very strongly to this, but I am not sure what light it throws on the value of naval history.

Commander James McCoy: I would, first of all, like to make a comment to Jon Sumida and his discussion, or his search, to find out whether historians influence current events and current thinking. I think the problem, or the paradox, here, is that historians, by their modus operandi, are bad at assessing their own effectiveness because they seek, by the nature of their work, always to attribute effect to cause and to document both. In this imprecise world, where their effectiveness is achieved rather through influencing thought or education, as we heard last night, [in Admiral Liardet's talk], this does not work out too well. The interesting thing is that, in his search through the Corbett-Fisher relationship for a specific, Dr. Sumida actually uncovered what to me smells heavily of a can of worms. It seems to my suspicious mind that Fisher was using Corbett's intellectual respectability and influence to justify, almost *post facto*, a dodged technical procurement decision on the fire control business. This leads me on to some work of my own, which has shown me clearly that historians have a hell of a job. I did, about ten years ago, a curious piece of research into a particular project area, the provision of radar to Royal naval ships. This revealed, over a twenty-year period, similar prostitutions of the process, whereby a staff requirement would be written and almost reach its fruition with the selection of a piece of particular equipment, when a little political decision would intervene in the propriety of this. One example that comes to mind was a particular radar that was being selected from a particular overseas manufacturer. That manufacturer was not based in the country to whom we wished to sell another completely different piece of equipment. So, within the space of six months, the staff requirement was completely rewritten: the points allocated, the order of merit, the weighing of different technical factors—completely rewritten to provide the

answer that met the political needs. How does the historian deal with that? That's where Professor Rosenberg is quite right to try and focus, not on the minutes months later, but on the organizational and political dynamic of the time. You have a hell of a job in this procurement area.

Jon Sumida: Well, in response, I think you're correct to see Corbett being used, although in my paper I try to show that Corbett had his limits. In *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, for example, he wrote what he thought he could write and avoided the technical issue, which was problematical. On one of your other points, in my book on Fisher, which was a ferociously difficult book to write, I was trying to get precisely into all of the political, financial, technical details, and also to show that sheer chance affected fundamentally the course of a procurement program. This experience convinced me that the study of strategic principles does not get you very far in many areas. What you have to do is to look at individual cases, and not in a superficial way; you have to sit on these things for years and track down every hair. Even then, there is no guarantee that you will get the story right. If the understanding of important decisions is supposed to be of value to naval officers and policymakers, then you have to have an accurate account and that means studying a lot of documents hard. There is no alternative to this other than speculation, which may be necessary but is not historical research.

David Rosenberg: Let me just make an observation on both comments and as a follow up to what Jon said. We have a vast literature out there in naval history with which all of us are familiar. Most of us have gotten involved in naval history, in part, from this literature, and it ranges from *Jane's* or *Combat Fleets of the World* to the *Conway's* books to Norman Friedman's amazing efforts in this area. For scholars, this is something that we do not refer to. How often will one doing naval history actually go out and refer to Raven and Roberts (Alan Raven and John Roberts), refer to *Conway's* various overviews of the evolution of the navy, much less Norman Friedman, a physicist who does not footnote. The fact is that we have a body of literature that we have to go back out and reexamine, because what Norman Friedman has provided us is a vast array of information on the process by which ships were produced. This is something that more often than not has not been considered legitimate work for academic historians. It has been the work of buffs, yet it has created a huge industry. It does keep people alive and it undoubtedly keeps the Naval Institute's book program, at least partially, afloat. The problem is that we need to address warships and their development as a historical problem, and we need to address it with respect to organization, to personality, to technology in a way that does not leave this area to only the buffs. It has to be done and that is what Jon ultimately started out doing. All of us to some extent started out in this business being thrilled by those large gray

floating objects. The question is how to turn this initial interest into something that educates both your colleagues in the field and insures that the general public understands the relationship that this subject has to the larger history of civilization. We have a difficult task. It is not clear whether we can produce good graduate military historians, much less sustain a generation of military historians, much less naval historians, in this country. I know, just looking around the room at friends and acquaintances, that there are people here who today are not working in the field to sustain their livelihood. We have a significant challenge.

It's nice to have a Naval War College. I hope we will continue to have this institution past the turn of the century. We have a major challenge ahead of us and that is part of what I think James Goldrick, John Hattendorf and Jon Sumida had in mind in putting this specific session together—as a vehicle to sort through various questions about the whole future of the profession.

Marc Milner: I want to return to a point that Jon Sumida raised, and I would agree with him on the whole problem of how we make naval history useful to the people who are the practitioners. In part, it has a lot to do with the fact that I think that we, as historians in relation to serving officers, are really anarchists. We do not really offer them the kind of things that they think they want. When I went to the University of New Brunswick to take up the task of teaching history, the University had recently lost its Department of National Defense funding for its Military and Strategic Studies Program, which was 99 and 44 one-hundredths percent historical. I remember phoning Ottawa to the Public Policy people, saying, “why did you axe the program at UNB?” Their response was that the committee which reviewed all the programs across the country decided that history was not forward looking enough. I do not know how you respond to that because it is obviously an ideological problem.

I have to tell you another anecdote. We are back in the program, and have been for many years now, but it is still, very largely, a political-science driven program. I happened to be in Europe this Spring on a briefing tour for seven long days on a bus with political-scientists. We had briefing, after briefing, after briefing, from political-scientists. Each one had an answer. Each had a flow chart. Each had a model. Each had a paradigm. Everyone had a solution. You came out feeling warm and happy that the universe was unfolding as it should and, if you could just get third-party conflict resolution working, everything would be great in Yugoslavia. We got briefings from historians on a number of occasions and they were anarchistic, at best. They recounted the problem. In the end, the historians said, “Well, now you know what the problem is. Good luck.” All the political scientists came out just shaking their head. Where was the model? Where was the paradigm? How are we going to resolve this?

With that long preamble, I would throw two points at you. One is, I think, that naval historians have two principle functions. One is that we serve the function of actually codifying the corporate memory. As you point out, corporate memory in the military lasts as long as a posting, in many cases less than that. They don't know what they do not know because they never knew it, and there's no one there to tell them. We actually do that and I think it is a useful function. Beyond actually teaching history as a discipline, as a way of analyzing and organizing facts, doing research and thinking through the problems is just about all we can offer. You can inform people of their past and you can teach them how to analyze and how to think in a historical discipline; but in the end, you can't tell them what "the answer" to a present problem is because that is something they are going to have to work out. In that sense, we have a real problem, because the people who are actually practitioners need to know tomorrow what that answer is. We can't tell them that. That's why we have a problem selling the value of history. I often tell my students that the problem with history is that there are no real new problems, just new people. I think the comment that was made at the outset, that if you want a new idea pick up an old book, is really where it is all about. Perhaps you want to comment on the problem of trying to convince people who have to know tomorrow.

David Rosenberg: Historians cannot provide solutions to current problems and we really do not exist to answer critics. We can, however, raise the standards of inquiry and broaden perspectives in modulating discussion. I want to emphasize that as important. The basis of this effort has got to be a naval history that is general, rather than particular history. I have a lot of problems with what is now called naval history. It is not that what is taught, or what is written, is all wrong. It is just that it is so incomplete and it is being presented as being complete. I think our ability to modulate the discussion and to broaden perspectives and raise standards is going to depend on the serious practitioners doing things differently. There are plenty of people in this room who are doing the kind of history which I think should be done. The problem is that there are not enough of us and the field is defined, in fact, not by the people in this room, it is defined by other people, and that affects the way we talk about it. One of the things that is very unusual is the concentration of serious practitioners here in this room today. We need such people talking to each other. Most of the time, if you are going to the Society for Military History or to the American Historical Association or whatever, you do not get this sort of opportunity. The concentration of naval history professionals is not high enough.

Captain Peter Swartz: I was reflecting on the influence of historians and theorists on naval officers like myself, and the case study that I am most familiar with is the project that the American Navy went through in the late 70s early 80s, which

was the codification of something that became known as the Maritime Strategy. Spence Johnson and I were part of that group that did that, and we have discovered that now we are sort of historical artifacts ourselves.

Were we influenced by theorists consciously? Speaking for myself, my own experience, and what I think the experience of the others of us that worked there was, the answer is no. It was not an image of Mahan or thoughts of Corbett or Richmond that formed what we were trying to do. Were we influenced by historians? Yes, two, in particular, sitting in this room, John Hattendorf and Dave Rosenberg, and there were more, of course. What did they do? They did exactly what Jon Sumida said, I think. They raised the standards of inquiry, broadened perspectives, otherwise modulated the process of discussion. That happened and it is real. It was real in my experience. Dave is right. Naval officers do not know their own recent institutional history, and of course, that became glaringly evident as we went through this. Simultaneously, with that development, was the wonderful thing that happened at the Naval History Center, with the creation of the contemporary history branch. Mike Palmer's book and other books in that series do, in fact, shed a little light on recent institutional history.

Two aspects that are most interesting about all of this are: first of all, after the fact, after it was done in the sense of being codified, looked at, massaged, and started to be published, first in classified form, and then unclassified, we started looking at historical aspects and historical cases. We discovered that there was a certain validation of things we had come up to. I couldn't say that the ideas of how you would get at the Soviet Union in the 70s and 80s came because of the record of what the British, French, Sardinians and others did vis-à-vis the Russians in the Crimean War. However, I will say that, as we started taking a look at the new literature that was coming out on the Crimean War, we noted that it was a global conflict, a maritime conflict, an allied conflict, and that there were actions in places like Alaska, Petropavlovsk, and the Kola, where we began to see some striking similarities. There are only certain ways that a global maritime alliance can get at a Russia or a Soviet Union. They're all there; they've been there. That was exciting.

Another thing, though, was also true with looking at Mike Palmer's work on Forrest Sherman and Ed Miller's on War Plan Orange, as to what planners went through in coming up with strategy. There are a lot of things that we did that we saw were validated by an *ex post facto* examination of history. That added to our sense of "hey, we are on the right track, as practitioners."

My last point relates to something else that Dave said about the Russians. What was interesting was that in my very limited experience, the Russians did not think we did what we did. They thought we had done quite the opposite. We understood fully what had happened in the Crimean War, in the intervention of 1918, 1920, '21, '22 and so on, and that we were using them. Trofomenko put out a book in 1985–86 in which he outlined this history, and he cited page

after page from Mahan's *The Problem of Asia*. Mahan's *The Problem of Asia*: now that's one John Hattendorf and the others never told me about. So, we went and took a look at it and Mahan's problem. Who has read *The Problem of Asia*? That's one, two, all right, three. Of course, two or three of you are modest, so let's say ten out of all. What was Mahan talking about? One of the things he talked about was how you got at Russia, if you were a maritime alliance. How you needed some continental anchors on both sides, how you needed to do it globally, etc. The Russians had read it. They knew it. They weren't surprised by the Maritime Strategy. Those are the thoughts and observations that I had thought of when Dave and Jon were going through their papers, and I thought that I would share them.

David Rosenberg: I have something very brief that just came to mind: a long time ago, a friend of mine, a naval intelligence reserve officer, came up with a paraphrase of George Santayana's famous quote, which I think is worth sharing here: "You know, those who study the past are condemned to watch others repeat it."

David Zimmerman: My comments are directed principally to Dave Rosenberg. What concerned me was your seventeen points. What value, do you see, in presenting these seventeen points in this way? Do you think that we can learn from these individual case studies? Are there specific lessons that can be applied to other case studies? In my opinion, history is so complex that we can learn only very general things from history. This is, perhaps, one of the most difficult things we have when dealing with practitioners. We can not give you specific lessons; we can not give you tomorrow's answers. As you went through your seventeen points, I asked myself, well, what of my study of science and technology in the Canadian Navy during the war. As I went through your seventeen points, I said, maybe I agree with this one. Oh no, no, that's completely wrong, according to my case study. We have to add twenty-four more points to point number seven, according to my case study, etc. I wonder what you see of value in putting this sort of systemized approach of seventeen questions in this fashion.

David Rosenberg: First, I didn't see any value in creating a unified field theory of naval history, by any means. That was not my purpose. Second, in approaching the question of what you're working on, science and the Canadian Navy, it is a very different subject than what I am attempting to present here. With respect to the standard approach to the way we study naval strategy, my seventeen points were nothing more than just what they have proven to be in terms of your comment. They were designed to be a provocation. They were designed to, in fact, provoke thought about the question of how one establishes a structure for

studying the subject with which he or she is concerned. In particular, it was designed to assist in thinking about the question of developing rigor. You yourself may well have done this in the past. I found it a useful exercise for myself, in the sense of examining my own assumptions on the work I had been doing in trying to identify characteristics that concern me. I did not say that this was the complete list. I didn't say that it was the absolute end of everything. It turned out that as I began working through the factors that I had been dealing with, these are what came to mind. I commented to Alec and also to Jon about this. If one goes to a historical association meeting and tries to foist this off as a scholarly paper, one would find, especially in the state of theory that exists in the social sciences, social and intellectual history, and in other forms of history today, especially in the history of science, that something like this is amateurish, at best. Certainly, as one relates this to political science and to decision theory, it is even more amateurish. I am fully aware of other approaches in other areas. In the history of American foreign relations, for example, we have a whole series of methodological revisions. One of my colleagues at Temple University, Richard Immerman, does work on psychology in international relations and diplomatic history. The fact is we are far behind. Do we have lists like this for understanding military and naval history? Where is the future of methodology in our field? That's what I was working on and it was a very crude approach to the problem. The fact is, as one goes out beyond Corbett and Richmond, there is, in fact, no set of historiographical literature on naval history *per se*, which gets into anything even approaching what we see in theory and methodology. That is what I was getting at, not providing a unified field theory.

W.A.B. Douglas: I just cannot resist making a comment myself at this point. The University of New Brunswick, a couple of years ago, held a conference called "Clio and Mars: the influence of history on the military." There are, in fact, some historiographical articles in that collection and I would suggest that there are people working in the field of naval history who do borrow eclectically from the social sciences, as we should do, and that people who are doing very important studies in the naval field enrich our field and make it respectable.

David Zimmerman: I was going to ask a question originally about Corbett and Fisher, but I feel it is perhaps more important to enter the debate about the thinking on naval history. To begin with, let me say something in defense of buffs. Probably most people in this room who are scholars do not work in more than one academic field. I do. I certainly have the refreshing feeling, talking to naval historians, that they are different from many scholars, in that they are actually interested in what they study. A sign of this is that, when you sit next to one at supper, he will actually tell you excitedly what he found out. Whereas, in my other academic field, I often have the experience of asking people, with

infinite precautions, if you can somehow get access to their data. The answer is no, because the world of scholarship is turning more and more into a business. Most scholars with whom I deal in my other field are businessmen who somehow have set up shop upon a certain territory of the human experience. They somehow want to exploit that part of the human experience in order to become more important, richer, and so forth. I think the spirit of the buff, people who are actually enthusiastic about what they study, is a very refreshing corrective to that. It is, of course, true, that in some ways naval history is far behind as a field. One does read, in such as the *Military History Quarterly*, articles that are just utterly oblivious to important discoveries in the field. It is very irritating to read that, and it would not occur in other areas.

It seems to me there is a kind of triangular relationship between professional historians, officials, including naval officers who are charged with naval matters, and the kind of buffs of the sub-professional sort. We are entering an era when probably there are going to be no great wars, like World War II, I suspect, for a century or more. The great military establishments that were called into being by the Napoleonic Wars, World War I, and World War II will wither and decay. The intellectual substructure of those establishments, the systems analysis, and things like that, the algorithms you might call them, are also going to wither, because they won't be needed in the same way. We will have a very disorderly world, but a culture that does not respect the use of force or the military very highly. It is somehow important, both for the official military world and for the professional historians during this opening-up—for us to draw somehow on the fact that military affairs, including naval history, are irreducibly one of the things in human life that are not boring. The challenge is somehow to draw on that, to reinforce a kind of orderly and systematic inquiry into history, rather than to see these things in contradiction. Does that strike you as being true?

Jon Sumida: I agree substantially with what you have to say about the value of history, but I think David was talking about something else. I am struck by the fact that in two recent general histories of the U.S. Navy, you will not see a single work of Norman Friedman's mentioned among the sources. I was just taken aback by that. I do not think that his volumes on U.S. warship design, which are serious technical studies based on a great deal of archival investigation, are so irrelevant to the history of the U.S. Navy that they cannot be referenced. To make another point, there is a problem with popular naval history, which has provided a demand for certain kinds of books which have all the paraphernalia of scholarship, with large numbers of footnotes and references to documents, and which have pretensions to being serious study, but which are in fact of little value as such because of their indiscriminating use of sources and lack of a satisfactory critical apparatus. And worse, it takes an enormous amount of time and effort to get those faulty and flawed works off the table so that one can

talk intelligently about things that matter. And finally, one can observe that in military history (and probably generally) there has been a tendency to study the things that are the easiest to study, not necessarily the things that are important to study. As a consequence, major issues are sometimes talked about in trivial ways.

David Zimmerman: I absolutely agree. Somehow, to develop a healthy discipline, there are all kinds of problems one has to think about in the way that Richmond thought when he founded *The Naval Review*—how to do something that is not being done right by other means. We should think not only about the defects of a field that is relatively marginal to the great mass of scholarship, but also about the defects of the more ambitious intellectual undertakings, like social science, a much more ambitious thing than history. It has been an utter failure in terms of its professed goals that were set out twenty or thirty years ago; has not achieved them and has not in any way accounted for the fact it did not achieve them.

Donald Schurman: The question now, it seems to me, that is missing in some of our approach to the earlier period, is to understand what the state of the art was. To take the question of economics in historiography, if you were looking at books in the period from 1900–1915, you would find almost no economic history at all. It was not until the Beards were writing in the United States that people began to look at American history in an economic way. H.A.L. Fisher, whose book was still in use in Cambridge in the 1930s, had no economic history to speak of. I am taking economics, as one kind of an example of the sort of history that was not then played in. I think, in the case of Corbett, that Jon Sumida very carefully indicated that he viewed the whole thing from an operational viewpoint. I think that's true. I think he was very good at that and showed a historical continuity when he began, but made no effort to play in other factors. It is strange, when he was instructing Richmond, which he virtually did, that Richmond seemed to veer away from it. In his study of 1739–48, a war which Corbett used to refer to as “your war,” there was a lot of economics in it. Whether Richmond was able to deal with it, and in what we would regard as a sophisticated fashion, is a question that is more difficult to decide.

One can see the change, and how long it took for the change to come in naval history, if you think about King William's War. Corbett set the parameters for it in *England and the Mediterranean*. The general argument was clear and distinct, but he did not do the detail. He was not really that interested in trade. John Ehrman looked at all this material and said, “Oh ho! Corbett's missed all that.” His ideas are fairly sound, but the economic details, that is the logistic details of the fleet moving out, and the kind of trade and things that they were dealing with, was left out of the history altogether. He changed it. In *The*

Education of a Navy, I said that I thought that John Ehrman had had the most profound influence on naval history of any historian of our generation. If he had a logical successor, I suppose it was Henry Eccles.

W.A.B. Douglas: I would add two other influences besides Ehrman, and they are Gerald Graham and I.R. Christie, some of whose students are here today. I believe that Peter Stanford has some knowledge of Corbett, and I wondered if he had anything to say about this.

Peter Stanford: It is sort of like *Paradise revisited* to me, because I wrote something about Corbett forty years ago, when I was twenty-four. I was then very concerned that the simplistic approach of navies existing to fight battles was not an adequate response to the developing challenges of the twentieth century. Corbett was just like the light to Damascus to me.

I am a little surprised that we have to fight off the idea so hard, because it is so obvious that history and historians are not there to give directives to men of action. I liked Jon Sumida's conclusion that the historian's task is to "raise the standards of inquiry, broaden perspective, and otherwise modulate the process of discussion" — but it seems to me we should go on from there. Corbett's great gift was to awaken the reader's historical imagination, to get him seeing himself in a stream of time, and acting accordingly. In practical terms, this means getting the kind of wisdom an experienced sailor gets—a "feel" for situations, an awareness of the unexpected, an ability to see patterns *and* to detect false patterns (Using false parallels is probably a worse problem than failing to consult the historic record at all!)

We seem to be straining at gnats (where does the historian's proper role begin and end, how can we get more respect, *etc.*) while elephants lumber by. Admiral Ernest J. King's gross failure to read himself into the continuing and developing strategic realities we were swept into in 1941 is a signal case in point. It is no joke that we had to go to the overstrained Canadian economy to get vitally needed escort craft, and still suffered shipping losses so horrendous that war gamers today figure those losses lengthened the war by the better part of one year. (In other words, restore half the lost tonnage and *Anvil* comes off two months earlier than it did; Patton does not run out of gas so early, *etc.*) I know we are not supposed to play "what-if" with history, but these are the alternative results that work on the game board.

What were King's problems beyond his rancorous Anglophobia and "tough guy" obstinacy? He was totally unread in the developing shape of the German challenge to Anglo-American oceanic hegemony; if he had just followed the story, he would have known in his bones that the aorta of the coalition was the North Atlantic sea lane—cut that, and the war's over, increase its flow and you redouble fighting strength against America's most dangerous enemy, Nazi

Germany. If he had read Corbett's kind of history he would have understood that armed forces do not exist to fight each other in some kind of elimination series ending, presumably, with the two strongest slugging it out until one of them falls down dead; armed forces exist to enforce national policy. But King did not recognize that Roosevelt's declared policy rested on that North Atlantic supply line. He had to be pushed into building escort vessels, instituting East Coast convoys, *etc.*, and he diverted everything he could to the Pacific, where it took three tons to deliver what one ton could deliver to Europe—why? Because the Pacific was “the Navy's war!”

That is what I call an elephant problem. It is so big, people actually do not see it—like land crabs scuttling about our business, we just see four giant tree trunks soaring into the air. Historical illiteracy is that size problem, and it is a condition endemic in America today.

I know that nobody at the conference is so foolish as to look at history as a black box, spitting out answers to questions. But having made that point, accepted and understood it, can we not get further into what history is good for? A good starting point is to recognize that it is process, an ongoing process with surprising continuities (and surprising reversals, on occasion!). Spencer Johnson of the National War College said “Naval History is the laboratory of our profession”—I wrote that down because it made such sense! Lord Fisher said, “The best scale for an experiment is twelve inches to the foot” and here we have a linked series of such experiments, performed at immense expense under a practically infinite variety of conditions. Shouldn't we just immerse ourselves in it, and get thereby the “feel” for our subject that a good seaman has for the sea and sky—and the performance of his own craft in their moving interface?

But above all, I feel we have to stick with history as process, and know inwardly that it is at work all about us, and that past and future are not in separate rooms, but are part of the same reality we are passing through in what we call “the present.” Corbett put this very well once. He spoke of history as a stream flowing from pool to pool:

Do not be discouraged by the present. It may seem a catastrophe which renders all that went before insignificant and not worth study for men of action. Let us remember that great wars always had this effect at the time. While we are close to the stupendous event it seems like a flood that has gathered up and swept away everything on which the old lore rested. But it is not so. As time gives us distance we see the flood only as one more pool in the river as it flows down to eternity, and the phenomena of that pool, however great it may be, cannot be understood unless we know the whole course of the river and the nature of all the tributary streams that have gone to make its volume.¹

¹ Julian S. Corbett, “The Revival of Naval History,” *The Contemporary Review*, CX, December 1916, p. 740.

This passage struck me so strongly that I copied it out and sent it to friends. My mother said it was the most cogent thing she has ever read about history, and also one of the most moving statements she'd ever read. She was historically literate. And that's what we should strive for in naval officers, and indeed American citizens at large: historical literacy. Let's just try for that. That's job enough and more.

And as for the "I do not get no respect" syndrome discussed at the conference, let's start out by understanding that naval officers, indeed all citizens, are working for Clio. If you get the process idea thoroughly in mind, and if you become aware of the continuity of continuities in history, then it comes clear that we are all working, willy-nilly, for history's purposes, we are all adding to her story in our time. That is, or should be, a humbling thought for historians—but also one that commands respect for what they do.

Don Schurman's linking of the Big Battle school to the materialist proclivities of the age is very good. Corbett's surprise and hurt that the heave-ho's he lectured to disliked the subtle processes Corbett described in the development of English strategic thinking is a penetrating observation, and one that goes to the heart of Corbett's contribution. I agree with Schurman that he was the first to see the development of an English style, as it were, that could be said to have begun with Drake, and which informed the thought of Pitt and Churchill. I talked long with Lord Hankey and Admiral Chatfield (Beatty's flag captain at Jutland) about Corbett's thought and its possible influence on Winston Churchill—they weren't really having any of this, however. I am afraid the navy thought of Corbett as the fellow who made everything so complicated and didn't really want us to shoot it out with the Germans.

Anyway the thing to do in this world is to do right and shame the devil (perhaps surprise him would be more apt!), and Corbett did that for maritime history, and I think, for history in general. That was the real contribution, and it was enough. Schurman sees this clearly, and states it so clearly, because he, like Corbett has that respect for the flow of history as a living stream of people, at least as real as us, not something that can be taken to pieces and ground up to be reassembled in test tubes, but something wild and "doing its own thing," which must be taken whole and on its own terms.

Jon Sumida: I would like to respond briefly to Don Schurman's remarks. I did make a distinction in my paper between Corbett's works of theory and history and his works of analysis. Actually, I think that Corbett did incorporate economics, at least in Drake and the Tudor Navy. I think that is certainly talked about in the chapter on "Fleets." There was a substantial literature in Corbett's time on economics and finance. There was Oppenheim, who gave us *The Administration of the Royal Navy and of Merchant Shipping in Relation to the Navy, 1509–1660*, and for matters of the day, of course, there was Bernard Mallet,

who wrote about British budgets in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. If you look at Mallet, for example, you will see a good deal of the budget discussion is about the navy and the army. I do not say that Corbett ignored economics; I simply stated that it was not part of his capital ship analysis. I would not say that Corbett prostituted himself. I think that is too strong, because it seems to me that Corbett did have intellectual integrity. He did want to support Fisher, but there were limits to that support, which can be seen in that curious chapter "The Constitution of Fleets" in *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. In that chapter, Corbett temporizes—it is a finesse. For an explanation of his motives in this matter, I refer you to the remarks that he made in the 1913 essay quoted by David Rosenberg in his presentation.

Dean Allard: We have been lamenting the fact that as historians we are ignored by policymakers, although the point has been made that we do not offer prescriptions. Therefore, what can we offer policymakers? I would like to distinguish between the policymakers' use of historians' work and the use of history. It seems to me, as Jon Sumida has suggested in some of his remarks, that the problem is not that history is not used, but that it is overused by policymakers, in fact that it is misused by policymakers again and again. There is a strong desire by policymakers to root their policy in history and in their understanding of history. We get strange situations, such as the Vietnam decision and the Munich analogy; one could go on and on over these things. Basically, policymakers do not remember that part of Mahan in which he observes that we must remember, not only the resemblances between history and the past, but also the differences between history and the past. This raises the issue of bad history and the total reservoir of history from which the policymaker draws. How might we be able to purify that? The solution I see is to continue what we are doing, which is to do professional history, to apply critical standards. We do not want a policymaker to read an article in the *America Historical Review*, but there is sort of a trickle down process by which eventually the concepts in the *A.H.R.* will show up in the school books, twenty or thirty years later. I would like to hear some comments from the panel on the misuse of history by policymakers.

Jon Sumida: That much more clearly states what I was trying to say. Policymakers do misuse history. You can see that that was what Corbett was trying to combat. He was responding to what he perceived as the misuse of history by the critics of the Fisher Administration. He did so very effectively and, I think, appropriately, especially in that early analysis. The only thing I would add is that I think we need a more complex vision of naval history to accomplish that task today.

David Rosenberg: I agree with Dean in terms of the way that history is misused and I think that there are a couple of thoughts that we need to consider. One

relates to the question of how we educate naval officers with respect to understanding history, in general, and naval history, in particular, when one looks at the way that naval history and history have been treated—for example at the service academies. At the United States Naval Academy, there has been a peculiar approach that contrasts with that taken by the Air Force Academy or the Military Academy. (This observation comes from having helped train a couple of Military Academy historians myself.) The U.S. Naval Academy happens to have a predominantly civilian faculty. Curriculum is not oriented the same way that it is at the other two service academies. At the Naval Academy, they study naval history. There is a requirement for taking—I guess now it is half a year of naval history and half a year of world history. That's it. At the United States Military Academy, at least in my most recent memory, which is the mid-80s, cadets took one year of the history of the military art. They also had a requirement, and I recall this as being the same at the Air Force Academy, to take one full year of history. This additional year is not military history, not naval history, but history. Be it American social history, be it European history, the point is to understand history as a dynamic, to understand history as something more than lessons learned and lists of names and dates, to study history on a much grander scale approach, a philosophical approach, if you will, to understanding problems. The Naval Academy has been following this pattern arguably since Arleigh Burke was a midshipman. You can look back and discover what Burke took between 1919 and 1923, and there were very similar approaches there.

Given the engineering emphasis that has existed in the American military, and in the United States Navy in particular, what we have seen is the fact that exposure to history after one leaves the academy is minimal, at best. You find yourself in a situation of having to remind, for example, nuclear submariners, that Hyman Rickover argued that the Naval War College did not need to exist, because if a nuclear submarine officer was a good officer, he would read all this stuff anyway. He would not have to come to a place like this because he would understand history and strategy already and would, thus, not have to go through what one goes through the whole year up here at the Naval War College. This lack of training in history had led to the haphazard creation of official supplementary reading lists. The Commandant of the Marine Corps came up with a reading list that included a great deal of history. The navy now has a reading list appendix in its navy policy book. The navy believes naval history should be read, but it does not supply what order and what approach. It is only a smorgasbord from which to pick and choose. As a result, we have not provided our officers with a means of understanding what history is, much less how to approach naval history and apply it.

The other aspect of the problem relates to the question of how we ultimately look to use history in policy-making. I have been blessed (or cursed) with three

separate opportunities to apply history to policy-making. In one case, I worked in something that James Schlesinger set up, the Office of the Secretary of Defense "History of the Strategic Arms Competition," which turned out a thousand-page, Top Secret document, now 90 percent declassified. It was an attempt to look at the patterns of the strategic arms race. I worked on the navy and supporting studies within that. What happened to the project? It started in 1974 and was not finished until 1977–1978. The conclusions were disputed by so many people who read the paper, that nothing ever happened with it. Harold Brown read it as Secretary of Defense, but it does not appear that the paper had an impact on policy. The utility of the document now, as we go back and look at the declassified information, is that it contains a great deal of information and leads to looking up other information.

I also worked on a history of naval long-range planning, done for the Office of the Secretary of the Navy. A fascinating subject, but a very short history, one could argue somewhat unfairly. I found to my satisfaction that it proved to be useful in one sense only. The Chief of Naval Operations at the time, Admiral Thomas Hayward, read the history in draft. He observed that having a long-range planning shop probably was not a bad idea. As a result, he handed his copy of my draft paper to then Rear Admiral Charles R. Larson (currently Admiral Larson, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command). Larson subsequently showed it to me, covered all over with red comments. Hayward told him, "Chuck, set up a long range planning group. This is what you need to know." Now, this was not the use that I expected of my history; in fact, it was not even a finished product at the time. However, I did derive at least one conclusion from the project. The history I wrote was sixty pages; if you are going to use history to influence policy-making, it should be short history.

Finally, in 1989, I was asked to go out on active duty for an entire month at Pearl Harbor to observe the concept of operations for the largest naval operation in the Pacific since 1945: PACEX 89. I was asked to review the concept of operations for the exercise, the war plans it was based on, the conduct of the exercise, and then tell Admiral David Jeremiah, the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, what I thought. After three weeks' observing and reviewing, I had only one week to write a twenty-page, single-spaced, Top Secret paper. I used a number of historical arguments and analogies—including Bismarck, the Schlieffen Plan, and the Berlin crisis in 1961. Eventually, I got a call: "I just want you to know, the CINC had a five and a half hour meeting with his entire staff. A lot of people cursed you, but the fact is that we have begun reworking the entire concept for planning for general war." I have not had a chance to see where that planning went, but that telephone call was very satisfying to receive. Did they understand what I was saying? Was I invited out, or was I ever allowed to see the transcript of what went on? No. That is certainly frustrating, but it clearly shows what contemporary historians can actually do. The only thing that I would

argue is that it is very useful for historians to have the opportunity to do things like this. Those who have not worked in this vineyard should not shy away from the chance to get involved, even though the opportunity to actually learn what your ultimate impact might be is minimal at best.

David Brown: This is a comment on Dr. Rosenberg's idea of flow in developing maritime strategy. When the Maritime Strategy paper came out in the '86 public version, the Royal Navy took one look at it and liked most of it. There were, however, one or two bits about which we were not wildly enthusiastic. If you think the Russians are suspicious about what you are writing, you should see the British Naval staff when it really gets down to it. Unfortunately, a few weeks earlier, I said something or other to the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff. My boss had been listening too, and he does not usually listen to me. I had said something about history being intelligence in reverse. So, he said, "Right, why have the Americans written this paper? What's behind it? What are they up to?" Look at whatever we can find in American writings, open writings, not classified writings, build up a very, very sound case as to exactly why they have done this so we can see the pure Machiavellian reason behind this paper. We got to the whole thing. We really had it. My ACNS bought it; First Sea Lord read it. I got a little letter back saying what a good job I had done.

Yesterday at lunchtime I had a word with Spence. Do you know what? The case we built up was completely wrong. We had all intuition. We were the buffs. We understood the kit; we understood the principles; we knew what they were getting at. We liked most of what it was, but we got it all wrong from the bits and pieces. One thing that drove us too, was one of the questions that came back to me from my Lords and Masters: was there any British equivalent? Have we got a maritime strategy, in a logical sense? How have we developed it over the years? We decided that the defense reviews were a key to maritime strategy, and they evolve over the years. The last one, genuinely, we reckon, in Britain, was the Mountbatten defence review, because that was the last one that was done in a single service atmosphere, in 1956–57. Mountbatten, going for brownie points, gave it to the Defence Minister of the day and it is known as the Sandys Defence Review, the Sandys Act. In actual fact, it is a very, very good maritime strategy paper. Since then, however, I wonder really if there is any place for historians in British defence policy working out the strategy, because it has been done entirely within the defence organization, which is not just three services. It is three services and a civil service, which is really the worst thing—the worst aspect of the whole thing. The influence the civil service brings to bear can be maligned from time to time. There has been no sign recently that our defence reviews, whatever you call them, have been inspired by history. They are more strapped by economics.

We actually wrote up this piece of paper about the succession of the history of the Defence Review. We sent it up the line to an admiral who had the bright idea of sending it to another admiral who decided to publish it in the *Naval Review*, I believe. He had a terrible job of actually passing this through the Civil Service, which did not think it was appropriate for the Naval Historical Branch, an official organ, to bring this paper out in a magazine. Although it was not meant for wide distribution, it was obviously far too wide for anybody to know, really, what was going on.

Eric Grove: I'll be quite brief, I think, for once. I was a little troubled by some of the earlier statements that all that historians can do is report on the past and say "right, now here it is"; it is quite an interesting thing. You might like to read it. It might not be relevant to what you want to do. If one does that too much, I could see why people argue that, for very good reasons, people will go off and get their arguments from other sources. As we heard earlier, they will tend to use bad history, make bad historical analogies, and come up with some wrong answers. To come back to Corbett, I think that the first quote in David's paper is extremely apposite. I think what Corbett was doing in *Some Principles* was to come up with principles of maritime strategy which seem to be vindicated by the history available to him. He was actually very good at it. He had great doubts about Mahan and that is quite interesting. I found in his papers quite interesting, scathing comments about Mahan. He felt Mahan was superficial and he felt Mahan had not used enough original research. Corbett thought that Mahan hadn't thought about the subject as deeply as he, Corbett, thought about it. I think that one reason *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* is such a good exposition of the basic principles of maritime operations, why it is such a useful basic guide to what maritime strategy is about, is because of the quality of Corbett's work. It was very high by the standards of the time, and it still stands the test of time. It is not a prescription for action, but I do wish, in fact, that Pete Swartz and Spencer Johnson had read it, perhaps before they had done that planning document. I think it would have gained enormously from their having read *Some Principles in Maritime Strategy* and from having absorbed some of the points about the defensive, for example. It would even have been better, perhaps, without their actually reading the whole book. I agree; the briefer the better. So, I will stop after saying this. That is why I put the "Green Pamphlet" in the back of the new edition of *Some Principles*. If you want an encapsulation of what the basic principles of maritime strategy are, in the narrow sense, of the use of naval forces in quite high levels of conflict, you cannot do better than to look at the "Green Pamphlet" and to reflect upon it. Having done that, use it to inform the basic thinking behind the detailed operational plans which are the stuff of the later historian's work when he comes to analyze what was really happening.

Captain Peter Swartz: Well we have obviously felt very guilty about it all because here we are today trying to make amends.

Jeffrey Barlow: Just a brief comment following up on statements that David Rosenberg and David Brown have made. One of the questions that comes to my mind is: What is the role of the official service historian in the profession, realizing that the service historian has privileged access to information, including classified information in many cases? In the past, of course, service historians were looked down on, as being court historians, writing and reporting what the service was expected to like. I think that this has certainly changed over on this side of the water. I know it has in Canada, and I am sure it has in Great Britain, as well. I might just throw it out to the group: what is the role of the official service historian in all of this?

Paul van Royen: Maybe it sounds a bit sour, but I am very glad that I am not a naval historian. I understand that the naval staff never asks the advice of naval historians, because they're limping backward, about thirty or forty years behind, as I've understood by your talk. I really would like to know why it is that naval historians are not part of the mainstream of history? They study economic history, social history, demographic history, history of technology, *etc.* I am very curious about this. I have been in my job for just about one year and a half, so I can still talk about this.

David Rosenberg: Let me comment on this from personal observation, as both a student and a professor, including years at the University of Chicago, fencing with my friend, Jon Sumida, here. The reason that naval history has not been integrated into the broader areas of history, I think, relates to the question of what professors are demanding of colleagues and students and what they demand of themselves.

Those who come to universities interested in doing military history will, more often than not, if you pardon the use of this term, take the easy way out. They will study areas that are readily available to them and that they are interested in. I have a constant battle with my graduate students to tell them "No. Under no circumstances should you complete your graduate education by making your four fields American military history, American diplomatic history, European military history, and then European diplomatic history. All you will do is cover the same ground, in most cases. Even the best historians will only provide you with a limited perspective of what you need to know. You need to get out and take at least one if not two fields in areas that are totally different than your specialty, having totally different approaches, be it sociology, be it political science, be it geography." The problem is that naval historians in this country, more often than not, follow the narrower approach. This is the way I have seen

them trained, and this is the faster approach. The question is, what is going to be the pay off? Given that a student often just wants to study the history of war, he or she will ask, "why do I have to look at that (i.e., a broader subject or a different subject)?" This, I think, is one of the areas where we have failed, in terms of the way we have gone about training our graduate students. Although I know a number of people who have not been doing that with their students, in a large number of cases, that is the way it has happened.

W.A.B. Douglas: I think that we have gone a little bit away from Jeffrey Barlow's question, and if I may just take the privilege of my position as chairman to give my answer to it—the role of the official historian is definitely to take a leadership position in how military history is studied and published, and, when necessary in order to do so, to stand to the bureaucracy. My predecessor as the official historian of Canadian Armed Forces was an intellectual historian by trade, and already very well respected in the profession before he came to the job. His predecessor also was very highly respected in the profession before he came to the job. I was very fortunate to slip in after them.

Dick Cohen of the U.S. Air Force Office of Military History, Morris Matloff, David Trask, Dean Allard, all these people are providing leadership in the standards and quality of the product of their offices, participating in conferences like this, and setting up organizations. In Canada, we set up a Nautical Research Society. Of course, I cross several boundaries in my role, because I am responsible to the Army and the Air Force too. So, I have taken active participation in what used to be called the American Military Institute, and I would wish to point out here that it has now changed its name to the Society of Military History. It is not nearly so xenophobic as it used to be. The conference that we are having next May, which we have organized in Canada, is going to be very much a crossing of boundaries on allies and alliances. We are bringing diplomatic historians in with social historians, and so forth, to discuss issues with technical historians and military historians—if you still call them military historians. I believe that there is a gradual process taking place, bringing military history on a par with other fields and disciplines.

Daniel Baugh: First I would like to mention what Don Schurman may know, that John Ehrman was my doctoral supervisor. The point that was raised on the other side of the room, I couldn't see who raised it, but he asked for instances, if they could be provided, of the misuse of naval history by senior officers. I have got one in my mind that really is worth sharing with you involving Beatty and Richmond in 1920. You will recall that Admiral Beatty was one of the few senior officers who regarded Herbert Richmond as well worth listening to. In 1920, the battleship in Great Britain, as an instrument of war, was under tremendous fire in the press. Even Jellicoe had said, in 1919, that he'd wound

up with too many heavy ships. That was one of the reasons for the submarine crisis and the shipping crisis of '17. The battleship was under heavy attack and the question was whether battleships should still be built. Beatty wanted to build them. He asked Richmond, "Give me some arguments in favor of building battleships." Richmond's reply, which he recorded in the diary at the very end of 1920, gives you a pretty good idea of how his integrity was carrying him over the precipice. He replied to his friend Beatty, telling him he was going at it the wrong way round. He should first describe and understand what the navy needed to do, and what its purpose was, and then find out whether battleships would well serve that purpose. Richmond just would not do it, and, I think, maybe we are looking at a glimpse of the rest of Richmond's career right there in that exchange.

I do want to comment, if I could, and provide a sketch of an answer to this great question of how naval history became separated from general history. I have actually scratched a few paragraphs on this in print and have some thoughts about it that I would like to share with you. I believe at the time when Mahan was writing, Colomb, Richmond, and certainly Corbett, thought naval history was part of general history. It had been brought into general history because of the accent on great power history. Great power history was central history at the turn of this century. What happened in the historical profession, which is what happened in culture generally in the Western world, was that great power history became *passé* for a lot of reasons. It was seen as illiberal, and so on. The contentions of great powers were no longer at the center of broad historical studies. One of the symptoms of its passing is the conversion of Richmond's chair at Cambridge, the chair in naval history that Holland Rose held from 1919 to 1933. In 1932, it was converted to Vere Harmsworth Chair of Imperial and Naval History. Richmond referred to it to a friend in a letter saying, "This is a merger of a rabbit and a boa constrictor," and indeed that's exactly what happened to naval history at Cambridge. In the end, I think it has to be said that the fault of separation does not lie, as has been implied in many commentaries that we have heard in the last half hour or so, strictly or, perhaps even, mainly in naval history. It lies in general history, which has eschewed naval history and pushed it out. The efforts to bring it back in are fraught with hazard. I began as a historian of naval administration. Even that, because the word naval was in what I did, tarred me, and in order to make tenure, I had to go into another field. Now, maybe I wanted to do that anyway; I do not really know what my motives were. But, I knew that professionally I could not just stay with naval history and survive in the profession. I have come back into it by way of the power of the state and of economics and finance. The problem, I think, is that general history has pushed naval history out. Take to heart what Professor Rosenberg said about the easy route. This happens in other fields too. They take the easy routes, too, and they are not all that broad, either. We pretended that

they are, and I think that for purposes of argument and standards, that's a useful thing to do. I would put a great deal of blame on the profession of history itself, which has tended to take that label "naval" and let us immediately know we are fighting uphill, within our profession, from there on. All sorts of people know this (myself, Jon Sumida, John Hattendorf) and it is a very tough struggle to do it.

Andrew Lambert: I think part of the problem of naval history, going back to the papers this morning and looking at the question of influence on decision making, stems back to a problem with the archives in Britain. If you look at the output of Corbett and Richmond, consider what they were writing about in their main historical monographic studies. They were writing about a period that ends in 1815. The opening of the public archives in Britain by John Laughton in the 1880s gave access to documents up only to 1815. Professor Schurman's point, yesterday, about the possibility that Corbett might have written an excellent book on the Crimea, I suggest, was not a possibility. He would not have had the public archives accessible to him. I think that is part of the reason for a split between what they have been discussing from expertise and what they can cover. In Corbett's coverage of the Crimean War, for example, in *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, he makes a fairly simple error of misreading one of his very few sources and he attributes decisions in the wrong quarter. I suggest that was a problem because the nineteenth century is primarily a century not of warfare but of technical change and adjustment. Had historians of Corbett's stature, in particular, been able to write histories of periods of technical change, rather than periods of warfare, they would have been more accessible, perhaps, and of more interest, directly, to people at the turn of the century, who found their work less relevant.

On the wider subject of naval history, is there such a thing? Is naval history a subject, or are we really historians who specialize in a branch? If that's so, what I would suggest is that if we think of ourselves as naval historians, we are starting from the wrong foot. We have to think of ourselves as historians, because if we are not historians, we are not naval historians. There is no naval history, but history written from a naval perspective on naval subjects. If we ignore everything else, then we are not writing history. We are writing something which might be good fun to read, but it is not history.

David Rosenberg: Dr. Lambert's first comment about the availability of archives comes back to the question that Jeff Barlow asked, about the role of official historians. It is something that I do not think is readily soluble. The official historian has an interesting dilemma. The official historian does have access to material that is not open to the public; the question is, where is the audience for whom the official historian should write. Should he, in fact, be slaving away in the hope of getting the material declassified, so it can be used by all and be

generally available? What is his role as a historian with privileged access, in terms of what he is providing to the decision maker. That's a very interesting area. The historian, in effect, can, if the material is packaged the right way, gain access to the decision maker. He or she can use the material in a brief monograph or in a historical commentary of some sort, on the subject of the day, using the most recent material. John Hattendorf has done that in a study he has done on the Maritime Strategy, which you have seen only in part, published in the *Naval War College Review*. The question is, are there more opportunities? Can you do this on a regular institutionalized basis, or does it have to be done on an *ad hoc* basis? That is something I do not think we have been readily able to come to grips with, although I know it has been tried. David Trask tried it in the State Department, having his historians available that way. They provided a kind of public information service, more than anything else. It is a real dilemma, but the availability of the archives is one of those things that, as someone who has had classified access knows, makes you feel frustrated and occasionally guilty, because there is all this material that you know, but how do you publish it if you're stuck waiting for the declassification process?

Captain Spencer Johnson: Mr. Chairman, if the group would acquiesce and just listen to a few comments from a serving naval officer, maybe I could shed a little light on some of the questions that have been posed. I must say that Professors Sumida and Rosenberg have certainly struck a resonant cord in me, in the way things are actually done in the Pentagon, and in the things that are recorded and not recorded by naval historians. I can say that, as one of the two Machiavelliae, who were put in a room in 1982 and had three weeks to produce a maritime strategy, we had read the theories of Mahan and Corbett at some point in our careers. We both had a life-long interest in naval history. That, to my mind, is the laboratory of our profession. Those are the laboratory reports of: what were tried and what worked; what were tried and did not work, with the full knowledge that the same chemicals mixed together may produce a different result the next time around.

So, were we influenced directly by naval historians or naval theories? Probably not. Were we influenced subliminally by what we had learned over a lifetime in the navy? The answer is, probably, yes. What David Brown was trying to find out, and perhaps still does not know, was the reason why the Maritime Strategy was produced in the first place. It gets back to a point that Jon Sumida made earlier. In the end, it comes down to money and policy. The Maritime Strategy was originally produced with only the secondary notion of how we would bring the U.S. Navy, in its totality, to grips with the Soviet Navy in a war of unexpected or undefined duration. The initial impetus for producing the Maritime Strategy had to do with the fact that some months earlier President Reagan had assumed office. He assumed office on a platform that espoused a

defense buildup. While it was too late to submit a new budget to the Congress from the new administration, they did put through a defense supplemental bill that added lots of money to the U.S. defense budget. Admiral Small, then vice chief of the navy, told OP-06 (the place where I worked), that he wanted to have, by 1 October, when the navy budget process started, a maritime strategic concept, *a concept* that would guide the programmers and the budgeteers to spend this money smartly. That was the entire impetus. It was to give an overview to our own internal budgeteers and programmers as to what they ought to be spending money for and towards and not to waste it on certain projects that might be considered fringe or frivolous. That was in 1982.

I can tell you that in the original draft of the Maritime Strategy, we had no timeline. It was the first time for the navy, in recent years, that all theatres of war had been amalgamated under one, single, conceptual plan. It was never intended, initially, to be the operational plan. However, when the fleet commanders in chief, CNO, and the secretary of the navy had all given their blessing to this concept, and when the CNO directed that it be war-gamed at the Naval War College to see if it would work, and that it then be worked into the fleet exercises in both the Pacific and the Atlantic, it took on the overtones of an operational plan. When it was worked at lower levels in the wardrooms, an entire new thinking within our navy had been sparked, because this maritime strategy had been produced. It took on operational overtones that the original drafters never intended it to have.

Secondly, it became a vehicle for other things. It became a living document. In the original draft, my colleague and I stopped with the initiation of nuclear war. We never touched the subject of nuclear war, because that was another subject for another day and another debate. However, the Maritime Strategy became a vehicle for two new nuclear policy issues. The first was, if confronting a Soviet Navy, which had overwhelming predominance in nuclear weapons at sea, how do you deter them from initiating a nuclear war at sea, which they might think would remain at sea. So a subsequent version of the Maritime Strategy included the now infamous attacks on the Kola peninsula as U.S. declaratory policy, which originally were only added to influence or to tell the Soviets that any nuclear war initiated at sea would not remain at sea.

In 1986, when the Maritime Strategy was published in an unclassified form, Admiral Watkins, himself, added the portion that had to do with SSNs hunting down Soviet SSBNs and, essentially, granting them no sanctuary. So the Strategy, itself, became a vehicle for other things. Finally, I might add, that when we had briefed this to Secretary Caspar Weinberger, one month after its first presentation, he was extremely enthusiastic about it. It told him that this was the way he was going to explain the rationale to Congress for the 600-ship navy, which the strategy would support. It also told him exactly how the navy was going to spend its portion of the new monetary allocation in the Reagan defense buildup.

As he was leaving the tank with the chiefs, he turned around and he said to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, "When can I see the Army and Air Force strategies?" He's still waiting.

My point, really, is this. The question and the issue has been raised about "how can historians be relevant to naval officers?" Jon Sumida and Dave Rosenberg have both hit on the points that history, written as historians currently write it, only contains a portion of the story. I would go a step further and say that even the records in the record office only contain a portion of the story. So, if you really want to know the totality of the story, and make it relevant to other naval officers in future time, you have to go to the sources. The sources are the people who made the policy; you have to talk to them. You have to know what was in their heads, when they did it, how the decisions were made, and what factors were brought to bear. You have to go to the living history, and you have to capture it, while it is still relevant. Fifty years from now, when the records are opened, that can be validated. A hundred years from now, when there are no more sources available, you can talk. But, unless you capture the living history, you have missed the greater part of the story, in my opinion.

Andrew Gordon: I applaud, entirely, Andrew Lambert's comments. I think that part of the problem of naval history is that the rest of the historical profession thinks that we think that we are a separate discipline, in a separate field, and that is all. I think we are culturally a separate entity, because if you are going to write naval history, particularly operational naval history, you do have to know an awful lot that is culturally different, that you will not find in other historical fields. I think, if we are going to develop naval history in the directions we have been talking about, with organization, economics, politics and sociology, and if you look at David Rosenberg's list of seventeen headings (How many disciplines can you squeeze into that as relevant? The highest number wins a donut.), what we have to do is either get people with training in these disciplines to come into the field of naval history, which very few of them are going to do, or else we are going to have to try and acquire the skills relevant to these other methodologies. For a time, we are going to be extremely amateurish and embarrassing. That may be a reason why some naval historians are reluctant to step into these other fields. What I would ask very quickly is: Do you consider that, if we succeeded in getting economists, political scientists, political historians, sociologists, students of organization, and other people into naval history, would that not further alienate naval history from the serving naval officer? Do the connections between naval history and the serving naval officer disfavor the historical profession from accepting naval history as a valid field? If we are progressing (if we want to progress in that direction), are we actually carrying the weight of association with the serving officer, disfavoring our academic

acceptance? I am not sure we can please both groups at once. It is going to be very difficult. We have got to try.

David Rosenberg: There is no ready answer to your question, but I would say this, that the demands on a naval historian would relate ultimately to his understanding of the audience for whom he or she is writing. That's the critical point. The ideal would be to have someone who could communicate in a way that does not get into the jargon of the time and, at the same time, be able to write for our colleagues in the greater, social-science world on these issues. I do not think it is an impossible task to do, if one is aware of the needs of the audience with whom you are working. The question, ultimately, is one of the intimacy between the historian and the naval officer. Many of us here do have connections like that. That does not mean that every historian should have that intimacy, but those of us who do, have a responsibility to make sure that we can bring to the attention of serving professionals the information they would not normally see. What it comes down to is individuals and how they work.

Andrew Gordon: What you and Jon Sumida have been talking about, it seems to me, is a supply-led revolution in naval history. Unless it is demand-led, it is simply wasting our time completely, because it will never happen. Creating the demand is far harder than convincing ourselves where we want to go.

Paul Halpern: Dr. Douglas made some excellent comments on the role of the official historian. This was an aspect of Corbett that was not touched on in the papers. It was not a very happy end of his career, and the Admiralty disclaimer to his Jutland account is well known. However, I think it should be noted that away from the technical aspect of a controversial encounter, where he was vulnerable to "expert" criticism (and politicking) of technical matters involving the battle, Corbett did some fine writing. I regret that hardly anyone really reads the official history any more, for Corbett's account of the hunt for von Spee is excellent. He is not bound by a narrow account of Cradock, Admiralty responsibility, Sturdee, *etc.*, but instead paints a wide picture which spans an area roughly three-quarters of the way around the world. He demonstrates how the Admiralty had to be prepared at far flung localities, ranging from the Pacific to the Cape to the Cameroon or the Caribbean. It is really a marvelous picture of the mobility and influence of a powerful naval force. Corbett also draws attention to the Pacific, how (belatedly) HMAS *Australia* and the Japanese were closing in, an aspect of the story that is often overlooked.

John Hattendorf: I would like to make three points: First, at the beginning of this discussion, Jon Sumida mentioned his great good fortune in finding the copy of *Naval Strategy* Mahan had inscribed and presented to Luce. It is a very interesting

piece of evidence. Although that copy of the book is uncut, Luce was quite familiar with its contents. Most of the book comprises lectures that Mahan gave at the War College between 1887 and 1911. When Mahan was not present, William McCarty Little read them to successive classes. For many of those years, Luce was present at the College. In 1899 and 1900, he informally joined the students in their work, and in 1901, received orders to active duty as a member of the faculty. In 1906, Luce instigated the campaign to get Mahan to return to the College and to prepare those lectures for publication. In 1908, the secretary of the navy ordered Mahan to do just this. In late November 1911, the book appeared under the title, *Naval Strategy*. During that period, however, something happened to Luce; I have never been able to ascertain exactly what it was, but the situation was this: In November 1910, Senator Eugene Hale of the Naval Affairs Committee had insisted that the 83-year-old Luce be retired from active duty. He continued to lecture to the College, giving his last lecture in June 1911 (published in the September issue of *Proceedings*). He wrote a book review that also appeared in September and an article that appeared in December. Those pieces marked the end of his prolific writing and speaking career. After them, he never published another thing, although he lived until 1917. His official medical record gives us little evidence to date the event, but it seems that he had suffered a stroke. I used to think that this happened sometime in mid-December 1911, but this uncut volume of Mahan's suggests to me that it could have been earlier.

Secondly, Jon Sumida and Dave Rosenberg have made some exceptionally important contributions here in outlining the basic factors through which navies operate. Their work clearly demonstrates that one can no longer ignore the complex interaction of science, technology, economics, finance, bureaucracy, logistics and politics surrounding ships and naval leaders if one is to capture the process by which navies operate. While I fully accept this, I would not want to go so far as to deny any value to the abstract study of naval theory and the history of naval thought. Although it is not, and never has been, the driving force behind naval strategy, I think that there is value in theoretical work, even if it remains only an academic enterprise and its historical development only a theme in the history of ideas. Nevertheless, any theoretician will point out that theory has potential practical use, even if some may ignore it. It seems to me that Mahan and Corbett among others, before and since, represent parts of a slowly developing body of abstract understanding about the nature and character of navies. This is outlined in Hervé Coutau-Bégarie's series on *L'Evolution de la Pensée Navale* and in the Naval Institute's *Classics of Sea Power* series. I think that these ideas have played a role in practical naval affairs, and may do so again. That role, however, should neither be ignored nor overdramatized, as it commonly is. Moreover Sumida's and Rosenberg's ideas should be added to that body of theory.

Thirdly, we have several times mentioned professional naval officers as one of the audiences for the work of naval historians, and several speakers implied that, as a group, this audience had special requirements that might put us at odds with the requirements of the academic audience. I think that this is a very important point, but it is more of an opportunity for us rather than something to bewail. Naval officers quite rightly see naval history as part of the special knowledge and literature that identifies them as part of a unique profession. In this respect, naval history has always played a relatively more prominent role than, say, the history of education for teachers or legal history for lawyers, but there are some similarities. The use of history by professionals within a particular profession has dangers that we, as historians, can help to prevent. Norman Gibbs once wrote that "Military history, unless closely allied to a broad study of general history, only leads a soldier further into the danger of in-breeding." As a professional historian working within the navy, I know that naval officers face the same problem. But we should be grateful that there is a natural, professional interest in our work and not shy away from it. But, I think that it is essential to try to break down the intellectual in-breeding of officers, encouraging their initial interest in history as a basis to respond and to expand their insights by drawing them into the broader view of general history. I feel quite strongly that professional officers in a democratic state cannot be allowed to become in-bred. As some one told me years ago, "historians can be missionaries of the liberal arts to the military-industrial complex."

James Goldrick: If the first central question of the conference concerned the proper function of the naval historian in relation to contemporary navies, that question was at least comprehensively examined—even if the answer was by no means clear. My own assessment is that the naval historian serves best by applying the rigorous practices and standards of his craft to illuminate the past. It is possible, as Corbett demonstrated, to define principles of action which can be tools in aiding assessment of past policies and their results. But historical principles do not necessarily translate into contemporary realities, and the historian who makes the attempt must himself necessarily be mutating into something different for the period in which he is so occupied.

This is not to deny that historians can provide advice on contemporary policy issues. They have a clear role to play. There is an aphorism that history, however written, provides no answer to present problems. Rather, it suggests the first questions which should be asked in any attempt to define solutions. For this and for other reasons, intellectually credible strategic studies cannot sensibly exist without a solid foundation of historical analyses. The analogy, in this case, is not one of "bricks without mortar;" strategy without historical perspective is more accurately "mortar without bricks." The essential point, as was implied by Don Schurman in his comments from the floor, is that the value of history, both for

its own sake and as a tool for other purposes, depends upon the academic discipline with which the historian approaches his work.

This judgement was the key to both Corbett and Richmond's attitudes to the role of naval history in the formulation of contemporary policy. Richmond emphasized, again and again, that he regarded history as a means to an end, but to an end that was indirect. He studied history as part of his personal training as a thinker and planner on naval matters and his professional priorities always lay with contemporary issues. His espousal of history as a tool for education within the navy had the same justification. As a naval officer, he valued history not just for its own sake, but for its part in forming intellect. He also regarded history, particularly that relating to the Royal Navy and its contribution to British security, as a continuum which led directly into contemporary issues. He sought not so much to draw lessons out of history but to establish the context in which credible policies should evolve. Richmond, particularly in his later years, wrote much apparent ephemera at the expense of historical analyses of significance, because he believed that his real duty, in or out of the Royal Navy, lay in attempting to influence contemporary national security policy. Dan Baugh is right to suggest that Richmond was never a journalist—but he remained an analyst of the maritime strategies of his day.

This explains the difficulty which other historians sometimes have in judging Richmond, on his own ground, but the admiral's position is something which we must understand if we are to suggest that there is any place for naval history in the education of naval officers—a second preoccupation of the conference.

Richmond, himself, more than once, fell victim to the very complexity of the naval problems which he treated, and it is fair to suggest that his historical perspective tended to make him minimize or discount outright the effects of technological change. David Rosenberg and Jon Sumida both point to a need for understanding the place of technology and the consequences of technological development in naval history. In this, they are echoing Corbett's judgement that historians could only understand naval matters if they had taken the trouble to master the elements of the naval profession. Corbett could not write about the navy of Drake if he did not perceive the impervious horrors of a leeward shore, and he made valiant endeavours to comprehend the complications of naval warfare in 1914–1918 in the course of writing *Naval Operations*.

The implication of Sumida and Rosenberg's judgement, and it is one which Corbett's caution in acting as a contemporary analyst suggests that he would heartily agree with, is that new capabilities do not simplify naval operations, but complicate them. Naval commanders, given more, will always seek to do more, and, in making that attempt, give new hostages to Clausewitz's avatar of war-friction.

It is this drive toward complication, which is a fundamental cause of the general naval failure to study history, a failure which served as the sub-text of

discussions on naval education at the conference. By their nature, navies are highly practical organizations. The business of sending ships to sea and keeping them there is so difficult and so demanding of intellect and energy that there develops a tendency to discount anything which is not directly related to the task at hand as superfluous. Experience becomes master. Thus, if there is little technological change over a long period, navies are preoccupied with what has gone before; they become, in an operational sense, highly conservative. If something has not been tried before, it will not be tried now; if a proposal ever failed, a second attempt will be rejected because of that first failure. Navies come to exemplify the Spanish blessing, "let no new thing arise."

Speed up the rate of technological change, however, and the same "practical" approach, relying as it does upon personal experience to determine what is relevant, makes the deletion of history as a source of guidance inevitable. The navy's collective memory has always borne a direct relationship to the age of the technology which the service employs. This was a tendency against which both Corbett and Richmond fought hard and with mixed results. Corbett and Richmond's service was to make clear that expert historical analysis of the age of fighting sail established a context within which the processes of strategic, operational, and tactical decision making could be made so obvious that the benefits for contemporary actors in studying the past would become intellectually unassailable. What some of their successors were suggesting at the conference is that we, as historians, have ourselves been left behind by the "march of complication." The evolution of the navies of the steam age—and of the air and missile eras which followed—is much more difficult to treat as a whole than that which went before. Yet our relevance depends upon our success at attempting such treatments. If they are good enough, naval officers will be free to learn the lessons and draw the analogies they think proper—which is all the historian should ever expect for his art from the contemporary world.

Corbett and the 1990s

Geoffrey Till

The Naval Agenda: *Fin de Siecle*¹ As the twentieth century draws to a close, modern navies are confronting a situation that is unfamiliar to them in many particulars. Around the world, naval planners are having to consider afresh the contribution that sea power and navies can make to global security and prosperity. In this connection, one of the much vaunted characteristics of navies has always been their great versatility. This quality will surely be in great demand as the new century beckons. The major navies will need to perform a wide range of tasks, but with significantly fewer resources, against a strategic/political/economic background of uncertainty and unpredictability.

The spectrum of military requirement for navies may be along the lines suggested in figure 1. It is worth emphasizing that it is a spectrum, demarcations between the categories often being very ambiguous. Corbett would have found war-fighting the most familiar category of requirement. This could range from total war at one end of the scale to limited war at the other, depending on such obvious characteristics as length of time, geographic extent, targeting doctrine and so forth. At the top of the range there is the most serious, but least likely prospect of conflict against a major power. Simply for planning purposes, the Western naval planner might want to take the Russian Navy (RFN) as a measure of the characteristics and capabilities required, rather in the spirit that the U.S. and British navies used to take each other in the early 1920s. There remains just enough of a possibility of this (given Russia's internal situation) to make such an exercise interesting, for there will certainly remain a large body of ships and submarines operating out of Kronstadt, the Kola, and Vladivostok until well into the next century. Our planners may also make the point that for many of the last two hundred years, the Russian navy was a considerable naval force. Russia's neighbours also need little reminding that Russia will continue to be Europe's strongest military power for the foreseeable future. The requirement to be prepared for such a contingency (however unlikely it might seem) generates a need for maritime capacities similar to those maintained during the Cold War,

¹ The opinions expressed in this chapter should not be taken necessarily to reflect official opinion in any way.

some of which would be substantively familiar to Corbett. Contested amphibious operations, sea control operations, deep water ASW, and the deployment of the nuclear deterrent at sea would all seem to come within this category.

Figure 1

<p style="text-align: center;">War Fighting</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Against Major Opposition</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Against Minor Opposition</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Naval Diplomacy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Coercive</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Alliance Building</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Maritime Assistance</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Good Order at Sea</p>	

Nonetheless, given the current political situation, the “Russian threat” can hardly be more than a planning device and one which will not cut much ice with Treasury opinion in London or Washington. Naval plans will need to be made in the absence of an identifiable and credible major adversary and this is an unfamiliar business. Common expectations of a peace dividend resulting from the end of the end of the Cold War will exacerbate the problem. As a result of this, the U.S. and British navies will see major reductions before the end of the decade, perhaps significantly bigger than the 20–25 percent cuts envisaged before the failed Moscow coup of August 1991. European navies can probably expect there to be far fewer U.S. naval forces in Europe’s waters from now on, a point worth remembering when considering the naval implications of events in the former Soviet Union. In current circumstances, European navies are more likely to follow the lead set by the sea powers rather than to attempt to compensate for any drawdowns in strength.

Given all this, on what basis are naval planners to base their calculations? Since they can no longer take the characteristics of the adversary as a measure of the capabilities required, naval planners are uncertain as to what should be put in their place. Perhaps it should be the requirements of allies, or the demands of the defence industries, or sets of capabilities extrapolated from basic national interests, or maybe established precedent skillfully camouflaged? Rejecting this approach simply as “old thinking” would be unfair if it reflected real continuities in maritime place and situation. Britain’s maritime requirements, for example, should surely continue to be set, at least to some degree, by its geography, by

its continued dependence on sea trade and by its Atlantic links with the United States. Characteristics such as these are more than merely ephemeral and should provide an element of continuity in an otherwise bewilderingly fluid world.

Relying on some estimate of the requirements apparently required by the second level of task, namely serious war against a less serious adversary, is also unlikely to offer much in the way of hard guidance to the naval planner. Each case would be difficult to predict and probably unique in many of its particulars. *Desert Storm*, for example, was fought in a highly distinctive set of geographic, strategic, and political circumstances which would make it dangerous simply to apply the lessons learned there to other different situations. But the problem is that in dealing with a world of multiple and unpredictable risk, almost every possible adversary and every capability can be made to look a necessary element in future planning. Particular examples make general conclusions even more elusive.

With the limited application of force, such as the U.S. naval operations against Libya in the 1980s, we shade into militant diplomacy and coercion. This second dimension of naval activity comprises the continuing, indeed expanding, tasks of naval diplomacy. Naval diplomacy is likely to be relatively even more important in a disorderly world than it was in the old days, because of the contribution it can make to the defence of international stability. Over the past few years, we have seen many examples of this type of activity, especially in the Gulf, the Mediterranean, and around the coasts of Africa. Naval forces do have great advantages in the diplomatic role for they are inherently flexible, mobile, and their liability is limited, so that if things go wrong, which often happens, naval forces can be extracted so much more easily than their land or possibly air equivalents.

We can expect much of this sea-based stabilization to take place in a cooperative context of some sort in which each nation makes its contribution to a joint force perhaps operating under the aegis of international organizations like Nato, the WEU or the United Nations. This concept of "Multinational Naval Cooperation" (MINCO as it is often referred to) will also have important political benefits in terms of alliance-building. Creating and servicing alliances will surely continue to be an important naval activity through to the next century, an activity conducted by a multiplicity of means including joint naval exercises, joint procurement, staff exchanges, and so forth. For all such purposes, naval planners will doubtless feel that they need to provide forces designed with allies rather than adversaries in mind. Navies will therefore be "independent actors" much less than they were in the past. More and more they will seek solutions to common problems in the company of others.

Lastly in the new spectrum of naval requirement that seems to be emerging in the post-Cold War world, there are those more humdrum tasks concerned with the maintenance of Good Order at Sea. The growing importance of sea-based resources (oil, gas, fish etc) and the vulnerability of domestic societies to the threats posed by drug smugglers, illegal immigration, and so on, suggest that these tasks could

become crucial. Here the preoccupation may be drug smugglers, Albanian or Algerian boat people, pollution, resource supervision, illegal fishing, and so on. Environmental concerns may be a particularly important growth area. These imperatives will obviously help frame the maritime requirement but might seem to be the concern of a blue lamp rather than a blue water navy. Nonetheless, they are traditional naval concerns and are widely regarded throughout the world, certainly amongst the smaller navies, as the first priority for naval planners to prepare for.

In sum, the range of tasks confronting modern navies is likely to grow rather than reduce over the next few years; resources on the other hand are likely to continue to reduce. The political-strategic world will offer naval planners much less guidance than they have become used to in the Cold War era. In fact, there is nothing new in this. It was, for example, the constant complaint of the British Chiefs in the inter-war period that they could get little guidance from their political masters as to whom they were to prepare to fight and when.

In this situation, because they operate forces of almost infinite flexibility and because they often cannot find people willing to tell them what to do, sailors have tended to go in for what their critics call 'parametric planning.' They resist being tied down to one scenario lest it unsuits them for another and prefer to rely instead on the inherent flexibility of sea power to provide the necessary options. The sailor's instinctive aversion to the specific and almost mystical faith in the capacity of a first-rate balanced fleet to cope with virtually anything can be distinctly irritating to the unsympathetic. Thus Henry Stimson's famous slur:

The Navy Department . . . frequently seemed to retire from the realm of logic into a dim religious world in which Neptune was God, Mahan his prophet and the United States Navy the only true Church.²

This necessary woolliness is sometimes seen to make a virtue out of vagueness and invites suggestions that naval planners ought to improve the quality of their prophecy rather than seek to persuade treasuries to allow them to develop the flexibility needed to cope with its failures. But the point is that naval planners will probably have to make even more use of this once, and perhaps still, criticised approach in the future.

So, in this situation, can Corbett help? Here the question is about the extent to which Corbett can assist us, not in understanding the past, but in preparing for the present and the future.

“What Use Is the Knowledge of These Bygone Days?”³ At first glance, it would seem improbable that Corbett could make any material contribution

² Quoted R. Komer, *Maritime Strategy or Coalition Defense?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Abt Books, 1984) p. 11.

³ Mahan to Luce, 22 Jan 1886, quoted in Azar Gat, *The Development of Military Thought: The Nineteenth Century*. (Oxford: O.U.P., 1992) p. 180.

to the solution of the late twentieth century planner's problem. Corbett himself observed that one of the values of history was that it highlighted dissimilarities between past and present as well as similarities. It would be easy to argue that there are so many very obvious and very substantial dissimilarities between the first decade of the twentieth century and the last that the conclusions he came to about maritime strategy and sea power are likely to be inapplicable now.

For a start, it might well be said, contemporary naval technology is so different from that of Corbett's day that his observations about the principles of maritime strategy could as well confuse as clarify. This was a charge that Corbett faced himself when he sought to establish that the principles of war were permanent. At Greenwich and elsewhere, he successfully challenged the all too common preconception that lessons deduced from the age of sail were irrelevant to the concerns of the naval officers of the machine age. As one analyst has justly observed, Corbett's defence rested on the way in which he defined such lessons and principles.

Corbett did not claim that historical study would produce detailed rules for the future conduct of battles and campaigns. Its value lay in bringing to light the permanent characteristics of sea power and the specific nature of its contribution to national strategy; what it could achieve and what were its limitations. Equipped with these insights, the contemporary naval commander would have a pattern of past experiences, what had succeeded, what had failed, against which to assess his present situation and desirable course of action.⁴

Corbett's approach to this problem can be seen in his treatment of Drake. On the one hand he lamented the fact that ". . . in the Elizabethan age, the principles of naval warfare were as little understood as its limitation"⁵ and applauded the efforts of such as John Montgomery to produce a set of ideas in 1570 "so sound and so strikingly modern in its ring."⁶ On the other hand, he admired Drake for his readiness, when applying such principles constructively ". . . to break rules."⁷ Since Corbett clearly took the principles of war to be a guide to thought rather than directives for action, it is hard to see why technological advance should undermine the value of his ideas.

There is much more substance in the claim that *strategic* change had undermined the utility of Corbett's conclusions as a guide for future policy-making. At one level, the values of the international political system are now different from what they were in his day. Corbett shared the prevailing Social Darwinist notion of his time that international politics was "a great game"⁸ in which the

⁴ Bryan Ranft, "Sir Julian Corbett" in G. Till, *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age*. (London: Macmillan, 1984) p. 40.

⁵ J.S. Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1917). Vol I, p. ix.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 345-47.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol II, p. 75.

⁸ J.S. Corbett, *England in the Mediterranean*. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1904) Vol II, p. 30.

major nations were locked in a bitter struggle for power and influence and were prepared to use force against each other much more readily than they may be now. This was especially important for maritime strategy because of the clear links between navalism and imperialism. But the end of the Cold War and the putative onset of the new world order, with its stress on common security and collective action in defence of Third World stability, make many of Corbett's comments and assumptions about great power relations seem unfashionably adversarial.

The result of this is that, at least at first glance, Corbett does not seem to address maritime activities at the lower end of the scale represented in figure 1, and these are likely to form a growing proportion of the overall task of the navies of the next century. For the same reason, the issues on which Corbett *does* concentrate have an anachronistic flavor. In an era in which the major maritime powers do not appear to have a serious and credible adversary and in which sustained conflict *at sea* is seen by many to be inherently implausible, many of Corbett's preoccupations appear largely irrelevant. His focus is on the great navies defeating one another, not cooperating against some common source of regional disorder as is the expectation now. His interest in the mechanics of coalition war, doubtless derived from his mentor, Clausewitz, would seem to offer little practical guidance to modern planners coping with the problems of collective peacekeeping operations.

These two seem to be the most serious charges that Corbett faces. It was Corbett's contention that ideas deriving from the past ". . . will light up much that is dark in later ages"⁹ and it is against this standard that the contemporary significance of his work needs to be judged. We will consider this by looking at a number of contemporary issues facing today's naval planners and see what guidance Corbett may reasonably be said to offer.

The Contemporary Value of Sea Power. Corbett was quite clear that power at sea meant power on land. "In the present work," he wrote of Drake and the Tudor Navy, "an attempt is made to give a general view of the circumstances under which England first became a controlling force in the European system by virtue of her power upon the sea."¹⁰ British experience in the Mediterranean provided another illustration of the same point. A naval force stationed in the straits ". . . interposed between the two seats of the French maritime power" and ". . . eating into the roots of France"¹¹ posed a strategic problem for the French Navy and undermined France's international standing, exercising a political and strategic influence disproportionate to the level of force deployed.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol 1, p. vii.

¹⁰ *Drake*, Vol I, p. vi.

¹¹ *Mediterranean*, Vol II, pp. 175-76, 182-83.

This was but one example of the way in which sea power could dominate world events.

He criticised those who conceived of sea power in narrower, more functional terms. He was particularly critical of those who confused the strategic importance of sea power with the incidence of dramatic battles, pointing out the “. . . often spurious importance which actions give to naval movements.”¹² The proper role of power at sea was also sometimes distorted by those who thought of the navy as a source of revenue and who were obsessed with the prospect of plunder. “The old hankering after the treasure fleet . . .” sometimes undermined strategic plans “. . . as it had done those of the Elizabethans.”¹³ He was opposed as well to “. . . the old and narrow conception of [the navy as] a force primarily destined for commerce protection.”¹⁴

Corbett had some implicit recommendations for how nations should treat their navies too, if they wanted to make the most of the potentialities of sea power. He warned that to exploit these potentialities properly, they needed to think of the navy as a *permanent* instrument of statecraft,¹⁵ not one that could be improvised into existence when the immediate need arose. Moreover, the ability to frame a national strategy giving due place to sea power was often, he thought, fatally flawed by the intrusion of domestic politics. “At home,” he remarked in *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, “the political struggle was uppermost and everything had to be subservient to it.”¹⁶ Corbett says little about the strategic effects of naval administration, of policy, resource allocation and so forth, because he took a very operational view of strategy.

One of the great advantages of sea power as an arm of national strategy, he thought, was its particular utility in situations of limited conflict. Where the protagonists were not neighbours, where distance made retaliation difficult, and where geography helped isolate or at least contain the extent of any fighting, any conflict could be limited. The nation with command of the sea was in the best position to choose how much or how little of the conflict it wanted.¹⁷ Maritime powers could limit their liability in ways that others could not.

Many of these ideas would seem to retain their salience to a surprising degree. In an age in which the Cold War could reasonably be represented as the triumph of Mahan’s whale over Mackinder’s elephant, it might seem strange for navalists to be concerned about a possible decline in the perceived importance of sea power, but such appears to be the case. The absence of an agreed maritime adversary and the implausibility of serious war at sea, may be seen by skeptics as

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹³ *Drake*, Vol II, p. 54 and *Mediterranean*, Vol II p. 218.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol I, p. 225.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol II, p. 139.

¹⁷ J.S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, ed. E.J. Grove (London: Brassey’s, 1988), pp. 53–58.

an indication that the sea matters less than it did and is certainly used as a justification for significant reductions in naval strength. Corbett's admonition that policymakers should give the sea its due therefore retains much of its force.

When compiling the *Official History*, for example, Corbett was concerned that the British had been seduced into too much of a continental land-bound strategy¹⁸ and stood in danger of neglecting important maritime possibilities. The excessive "continentalisation" of national strategy that he saw taking place around him might, he thought, damage national interests. Even in modern maritime states, it is possible to see the same influences at work. In the debate over the nature and significance of *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm* it has proved necessary for navalists to argue showing that the long, slow, and often undramatic processes of sea power are still crucial, even in an age of aircraft, missiles, and brilliant weaponry.

This may be especially the case in situations of limited conflict. Corbett's arguments about the relative containability of limited conflicts when the maritime dimension is central can be confirmed by the contrast often drawn between the contained and limited sea-based conflict in the Falklands in 1982 and the open-ended escalatory land conflict that Israel embarked upon in the Lebanon at more or less the same time. Politicians seem better able to keep control of limited sea-based operations than they are their air/land equivalents, and so, even in defence of stability, the powers are much more ready to commit naval forces, which can be quite readily withdrawn, than air/land forces, which often cannot. The international response to the tragic events in the former Yugoslavia illustrate the point exactly. It is in such circumstances that Corbett's observations about the *political* value of sea power seems particularly apposite.

Corbett's main line of argument was quite clear. As far as he was concerned, the first function of the fleet was "... to support or obstruct diplomatic effort."¹⁹ But the competitive tenor of the Great Power diplomacy of his times meant that his stress was on the *coercive* functions of naval diplomacy. Corbett did not dwell on the mechanics of naval diplomacy in anything like the useful detail that modern scholars do. Moreover, he has little to say about the lower, less coercive end of the naval diplomatic scale. Contemporary naval planners are currently preoccupied with the contribution that naval activities may make to the creation or maintenance of alliances and coalitions through a spectrum of activities including bilateral or multilateral exercises, multinational force structure talks (at least in the new Nato), joint procurement, staff college exchanges, ship visits, and the like. In all these ways, navies make a very real contribution to the diplomacy of modern states. Corbett would certainly have approved of all of this, and would no doubt have read the developing literature with real interest.

¹⁸ Donald M. Schurman, *Julian S. Corbett 1854-1922* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1981) pp. 152-69.

¹⁹ J.S. Corbett, *England in the Seven Years War* (London: Longmans, Green and Co Ltd, 1907) Vol I, p. 6.

But because he was writing in a more adversarial era and one in which the great powers were operating in a much less interdependent world than they are now, his works have, frankly, little advice to offer.

Much the same can be said about another theme that emerges in Corbett's various works, namely the impact that strictly domestic political and economic affairs may have on naval policy. It was his contention that this was often profoundly unhelpful in that it could lead to divided counsels or to unjustifiable reductions in, or misapplications of, national resources for naval purposes. As they grapple with the problem of matching declining resources to apparently expanding commitments and as they respond to the pressure of parliamentarians anxious to defend their constituencies, modern naval planners will recognize the problem. But again, they will not find much useful advice from Corbett in how they should deal with it other than to present their professional case as clearly and as persuasively as they can. There are now many books which dissect in useful detail the impact of such considerations on naval policy,²⁰ but none were written by Corbett.

To sum up, Corbett's views and trenchant arguments about the continuing utility of sea power remain highly relevant in an era when we have seen, in all the maritime countries, a perfectly understandable and perhaps largely justifiable reduction in planned naval forces levels. Corbett's ideas should remind defence planners of the need to make sure that sea power is given due attention in a properly crafted national, or alliance, security policy. It may well be that given present and future uncertainties, our planners need all the help they can get and cannot afford purposely to neglect any source of advice and, certainly now, views as persuasive as Corbett's.

The Combined Arms Approach.

Since men live upon the land and not upon the sea, great issues between nations at war have always been decided—except in the rarest cases—either by what your army can do against your enemy's territory and national life or else by the fear of what the fleet makes it possible for your army to do.²¹

Corbett's emphasis on the contribution that sea power could and should make to national strategy plainly did not lead him into dangerous exaggeration. Acknowledgement of the limitations of sea power runs as a *leitmotif* throughout his work. He remarked:

Of late years the world has become so deeply impressed with the efficacy of sea power that we are inclined to forget how impotent it is of itself to decide a war against great Continental states, how tedious is the pressure of naval action unless

²⁰ V. Davis., *The Admiral's Lobby* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1967) is a good early example of the genre.

²¹ *Some Principles*, p. 16.

it be nicely co-ordinated with military and diplomatic pressure. It was 15 years after the defeat of the Armada before we could obtain peace with Spain, even on the *status quo ante bellum*. It was ten years after Trafalgar before Revolutionary France accepted defeat. "We English," wrote Nelson in the Gulf of Genoa, where he was first brought face to face with the ultimate problems of his art, "we English have to regret that we cannot always decide the fate of Empires on the sea."²²

For this reason he stressed the need to strike an effective balance between naval and military strategy, and one that was based on frank acknowledgement that the concepts, procedures, and requirements of the two were fundamentally different in many essentials. His was not the argument so often characteristic of Soviet thought on the matter in the bad old days that naval strategy had no independent existence: instead he argued that a nation's strategy should be more of a synthesis derived from a union of opposites.

The form this balance between the two kinds of strategy took would depend on general national circumstances (for some nations were clearly more maritime than others) and also on the particular strategic exigencies of the moment. He was at his most interesting on this point when dealing with the Russo-Japanese war. This was a struggle involving one very maritime power, Japan, for the possession of a very maritime prize, namely the peninsula of Korea. Not surprisingly, therefore the naval element of Japan's strategy would in many cases predominate in a situation in which "... everything turned on the sea factor."²³ He described, approvingly, the manner in which the Japanese evolved a joint staff, the detailed mechanics of which rested on this conclusion. He also pointed out that operational priorities between naval and military requirements in what was essentially an amphibious war often had to give precedence to the naval dimension, even if this caused tensions with the army.²⁴

Nonetheless, Corbett did not neglect the legitimate demands of the land war, even in a maritime environment. Given the circumstances, he thought, "it is obvious that a war framed on these lines demands a very accurate co-ordination of the land and sea forces. This is, indeed, the paramount necessity. . . ."²⁵ Once the Japanese fleet had concentrated, "... the movement of the two services goes hand in hand and our standpoint must be one from which the operations both on land and at sea can be kept in view as closely and clearly as possible. The war, in fact becomes essentially amphibious, and so intimately are naval and military operations knit together in a single theatre that the work of the one service is unintelligible apart from that of the other."²⁶ Equally obviously, in less maritime

²² *Seven Years War*, Vol I, p. 5.

²³ J.S. Corbett, *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War 1904-5* (London: Admiralty War Staff, 1914) Vol I, p. 17.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-75, 328.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

conflicts, the land element could be expected to predominate, but in this case, the naval element might need to be defended.

So what are the implications of all this for the contemporary naval planner? Four tentative conclusions immediately suggest themselves. Firstly, a study of these issues suggests that it is unwise both to ignore the limitations of sea power and to exaggerate the extent to which it should dominate national or alliance strategy. Indeed, the maritime/amphibious strategy of the sort advocated by Corbett can be said to have failed even the maritime British for much of the twentieth century.²⁷ Sailors should not promise what they cannot deliver.

But, secondly, it is, as we have seen, equally important for the naval planner to insist that the maritime component of national strategy is usually indispensable. A balanced, joint strategy makes the best of what all the armed services can provide. This is more likely to come about when extremism is avoided and when the services direct their fire at other people rather than at each other. The calm moderation of Corbett's approach to these matters, which acknowledges the limitations of sea power as well as its strengths, has therefore much to commend it in current circumstances.

Thirdly, Corbett's particular interest in the maritime powers did not blind him to the fact that the optimum mix of the three dimensions of war (land, air, and sea) would depend on the circumstances and would almost certainly be different every time. In major war against a continental adversary, the maritime element would probably be less important than in intervention operations against distant medium/minor powers. A sea-based approach may be especially appropriate to limited operations with a strong political flavor, as we have seen. Nevertheless, the uniqueness of each case combined with our all-too-evident inability to predict events emphasizes the need for a mix of capabilities from which nations or coalitions can make the best selection to suit each case. Above all, it emphasizes the need for flexibility and for the habit of cooperation between the services.

Fourthly, Corbett's constant reminders that naval warfare is different from land warfare (and presumably from air warfare too!) should perhaps lead the naval planner to argue that purple staffs and purple concepts should be based on a constructive blend of the different qualities that each military dimension has to offer, rather than on a pretence that these differences do not exist. The notion that for sailors to make a useful contribution at the purple level they first need to master the blue has many important implications for policy, education, and training.

Battle, command of the sea, and the constitution of the fleet. Paradoxically, it was where Corbett most irritated his naval audiences that he should have done them most good. Over and over again, Corbett sought to remind sailors that command of the sea should not be seen as an end in itself, and that it was a

²⁷ For a useful discussion of this point, see David French, *The British Way in Warfare 1688–2000*, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990) pp. 146–201.

relative concept. Absolute command of the sea was little more than an ideal; high levels of command of the sea were extremely difficult to achieve and unnecessary to a surprising extent. Even in a profoundly maritime war, all sorts of useful military manoeuvres could be conducted without it. In 1903, all the Russians decided “. . . they could succeed without getting the command. By merely keeping it in dispute they would gain time enough to bring their vastly superior military strength to bear.” It was equally proper for the Japanese to conclude that in such circumstances they could conduct amphibious operations without securing command of the sea first.²⁸

The fact that command of the sea was neither an absolute nor always absolutely necessary led Corbett to warn sailors that a Clausewitzian pursuit of total victory by decisive battle at sea could in fact be less than sensible. It is important however, not to exaggerate the extent of Corbett’s skepticism about command of the sea and decisive battle. He acknowledged that the concerted pursuit of these two central objectives of “Mahanian” maritime strategy was usually valid.²⁹ It was only his willingness to say that sometimes it might not be, that got him into trouble with the Admiralty.

He was concerned about the unremitting pursuit of command-through-battle for four reasons. Firstly it might well prove nugatory in those all-too-common situations where a weaker adversary declined the invitation to attend his own execution.³⁰ Secondly, it might not work for good operational reasons. Thirdly, concentrating on the rigorous requirements of securing command could easily damage a navy’s capacity to exploit that command (or the lack of it), particularly through amphibious operations, but also through campaigns against or in defence of shipping. Command of the sea in itself did not win wars or decide political outcomes, but being able to exploit that command very well might.

Fourthly and perhaps most importantly, the pursuit of the decisive battle could so easily make it difficult for sailors and others to see what sea power was really about. Thus,

We require for the guidance of our naval policy and naval action something of wider vision than the current conception of naval strategy, something that will keep before our eyes not merely the enemy’s fleets or the great routes of commerce, or the command of the sea, but also the relations of naval policy and action to the whole area of diplomatic and military effort.³¹

All too often, he thought, the simple-minded (in uniform and out of it) confused the incidence of dramatic battle with the role and importance of sea power. They were not the same thing at all.

²⁸ *Russo-Japanese War*, Vol I, p. 46, 73; *Some Principles*, pp. 103–4.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

³¹ *Seven Years War*, Vol I, p. 5.

So what lessons should the modern naval planner draw from all this? A number suggest themselves.

Now that the major maritime threat to the West's capacity to command the sea appears to have disappeared, it might be particularly necessary for sailors to bear in mind Corbett's conclusion that command of the sea was only a means to an end. This might encourage a helpful shift in attention away from the requirements of power at sea and towards its consequences. Sailors will be effective in winning resources in the future by emphasizing not so much what they need, but more what they can do.

In rather the same way, critics may need reminding that there is more to sea power and maritime strategy than fighting decisive battles. This should be a useful device for protecting navies against the simplistic idea that since there is at the moment no credible adversary who might need to be dealt with in a major war at sea, there is now no need for significant navies.

At this point it is perhaps worth making a brief digression back into simpler Cold War days. Corbett was always concerned with the risks of sailors making a fetish of the offensive. He thought that "modern navies . . . were becoming far too valuable and hard to replace to be gratuitously thrown away in ill-considered offensives." While it might seem magnificent to make the enemy's coast the Royal Navy's true frontier, it was not inevitably a sensible operation of war. "You might as well," he remarked "try to plan a campaign by singing 'Rule Britannia.'" ³²

All of this, as has justly been remarked, ³³ had great resonance in the 1980s in the era of "The Maritime Strategy." The tremendous controversy associated with the plans of the U.S. Navy in particular suggests that while in this case Corbett's warnings may or may not have been justified, the issues he raised are of permanent utility.

To return to the post-Cold war era, Corbett's sophisticated ideas on the instrumentality of command of the sea and the alleged centrality of battle in this way have a special salience in current circumstances. When everything else in the military sphere is under review, it would be foolish, indeed, for sailors to ignore the possibility that skepticism about the need for sea control capacities may arise, even in the maritime powers. After all, a Mahanian command-of-the-sea model navy is far from being the only type we have seen emerge, even in the United States. On the contrary, in the nineteenth century, for example, political support was not for a navy capable of fighting a *guerre d'escadre* but one capable merely of taking on the Barbary pirates and with limited capacity to discommode a serious maritime power. The notion that much more than this was required only gathered real force from the 1880s. ³⁴ Since then, several

³² E.J. Grove in *Some Principles*, pp. xxviii-xxix.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

³⁴ K.J. Hagan, *This People's Navy: The Making of American Sea Power*. (New York: The Free Press, 1991) pp. 193-227.

sea-denial navies based on torpedo boats, submarines and/or aircraft have appeared. Today, many of the world's navies are concerned merely with the security of their own seas. Even the U.S. Navy of the 1990s might not be entirely proof against such challenges. After all, it was not so very long ago that Admiral Elmo Zumwalt proposed a remodelled navy which certainly seemed to represent to its critics a significant departure from the Mahanian model.³⁵

The justifications for these alternative navies have been various. Sometimes it has been that nothing more is needed, because an ally will provide what is necessary. More commonly it is that nothing else is possible either because of a shortage of resources or because of the more urgent demands of other types of military preparation. Sometimes such arguments have been based on the proposition that new technology has made old-fashioned sea control navies obsolete anyway. For all such reasons, it would be dangerous indeed for sailors automatically to make the assumption that command navies are the only ones on offer.

The calm, good sense of Corbett might help here. He reminded us that command of the sea as a general rule needs to be secured (or maintained) before it can safely and effectively be exploited. But a reading of his work might however suggest a need for a shift in the balance between what might be termed the control fleet and the exploitation fleet, to the benefit of the latter.³⁶ Those concerned with the size and shape of future navies might well conclude that there is now relatively less need for forces intended primarily to win command of the sea and relatively more for those intended to use it. This, indeed, appears to be a theme underlying the U.S. Navy's new strategic formulation, "From the Sea."

In drawing the correct conclusions from *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm*, Corbett's focus on outputs rather than inputs is particularly valuable. The major maritime contribution was not in winning command of the sea, for that proved to be hardly in contention, but in exploiting it partly through the imposition of sanctions (a splendid and crucial example of the *political* effectiveness of sea power) the transportation of military matériel and personnel to the theatre and finally to the projection of power ashore. The cramped nature of the sea area involved and the fact that this was in essence a campaign between territorial neighbours meant that this was far from being a maritime war like the Falklands, but, even so, the observer can see more than a hint of Corbett's ideas of maritime strategy in the subsequent conduct of operations. For example,

This power of disturbing the enemy with feints is of course inherent in the peculiar attributes of combined operations. . . . In mine-sweeping vessels, for instance, there is a new instrument . . . capable of creating a very strong impression at small cost to the fleet. Should a flotilla of such craft appear at any practicable part of a

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 378–79.

³⁶ For a discussion of this, see *Some Principles*, pp. 114–15.

threatened coast and make a show of clearing it, it will almost be a moral impossibility to ignore the demonstration.³⁷

This almost sounds like an extract from one of General Schwarzkopf's despatches and certainly highlights characteristics of the "exploitation fleet" likely to be of particular value in an uncertain future.

Several other aspects of the composition of the fleet are also worth looking at, namely, the optimum characteristics of the control fleet itself. With the end of the Cold War there has been a significant growth of interest in the requirement of operations in local seas, and something of a switch in emphasis in naval preoccupations from the conduct of blue-water to green-water operations. But this has conflicted with several long-standing concerns about the consequence of new technology. Many have argued that sophisticated mines, naval missiles, fast patrol boats, quiet diesel coastal submarines, and attack aircraft have significantly increased the risk for blue-water units operating in local waters. Domestic political sensitivity to the possible loss of life compounds the difficulty and may significantly reduce the capability gap between the strong and the weak, making it more difficult for the former to dominate the latter.

This is not an entirely novel problem. Corbett was well aware that the support of military expeditions against the defensive measures of local powers charged the fleet "with . . . duties of a most exacting kind."³⁸ In his day, there were many who argued that the advent of the modern torpedo would pose considerable risks to fleets engaged in major operations. His analysis of the influence of fire ships led him to conclude that the weaponry particularly associated with minor counterattacks would probably continue to prove containable in the long run as "the limitations of the weapon were more accurately measured." For the time being, it was impossible to come to definite conclusions, not least because "The unproved value of submarines only deepens the mist which overhangs the next naval war." He concluded that such weaponry would at least prove a complicating factor and wisely pointed out that,

The moral influence will be considerable, and at least at the beginning of a future war will tend to deflect and hamper the major operations and rob of their precision the lines which formerly led so frankly to the issue by battle.³⁹

Such views were precisely mirrored in the experience of *Desert Storm*. At the beginning, the conventional wisdom was that the Gulf was too confined an area for the operation of carrier battle groups, that fast-patrol boats armed with surface-to-surface missiles would represent a formidable threat and that Iraqi

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 280 ff.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 321-22.

mine fields would make projection operations much too difficult. There was clearly substance in all these views, but in each case Iraq's sea denial capacities were overborne at acceptable cost to the coalition. The experience of the Gulf War, in short, seems to confirm everything Corbett said.

A few tentative conclusions would appear to flow from the above. In the first place, the contemporary naval planner faces a situation that is different in many important respects from that obtaining in Corbett's day. The world situation is less clear-cut, less adversarial in some ways, technologically far removed. Naturally, this means that some central preoccupations of the 1990s raise no echoes at all in Corbett's work. He offers little guidance in the mechanics of naval diplomacy, the operation of nuclear weapons, the processes of multinational naval cooperation or the philosophy of maritime arms control. Equally, much of what Corbett does write about, most notably in the area of battle fleet operations, is fascinating as historical analysis but offers little guidance for the very different world of the 1990s—though he appeared a good deal more “relevant” to the maritime confrontations of the Cold War period. Corbett's view was that much of the value of naval history resides in its capacity to identify what was new; from this perspective his writings have considerable negative value in the modern world.

But having made these two significant qualifications, it remains true that much of Corbett's cool, intellectually elegant and well-researched work retains a good deal of utility for modern naval planners. And this for two reasons. Firstly, much of what he said still seems in itself sensible and relevant, as we have seen.

Secondly, and more importantly, the value of Corbett's reflections lies not so much in what he said, but in the spirit of reasonable moderation that informs everything he wrote. He raises permanent issues, rather than attempts to supply answers. His ideas are tools for thought, not substitutes for it. Because he could see both sides to every question, because he avoided absolutes, because he so well avoided being a “terrible simplifier,” Corbett's works should certainly remain prominent in the reading lists of those institutions preparing the naval policymakers of the future.

Richmond and Arms Control

Eric J. Grove

If any particular event caused Sir Herbert Richmond's departure from active service in the Royal Navy it was his decision to publish over his own name two articles in *The Times* of London on 21 and 22 November 1929 entitled "Smaller Navies—A Standard for All" and "The Capital Ship." In these Richmond put forward radical ideas on naval arms limitation at variance with Admiralty policy.¹ The results were predictable; a sharp letter from the Admiralty Secretary and no further offer of active employment. In the minds of his fellow sea officers, Richmond became associated with the general idea of arms limitation and with the negative effects of the London Treaty of the following year.² This association continues to this day and is no doubt responsible for the commissioning of this paper. Richmond, however was not a simple disarmeer. Indeed, he set his face firmly against the naval arms reduction treaties of his day, the 1930 London Treaty in particular. As he wrote to Churchill, a former opponent but now an opposition politician looking for anti-government ammunition:

The processes of thought by which the Treaty is governed are I am convinced at utter variance with every principle of strategy and all sound policy on defence. The supposition that strength at sea is capable of being calculated in the terms of rigid mathematical formulas is childish.³

In the following I hope to elucidate precisely what Richmond's views were on naval arms reduction and explain why he differed from the official line on the subject. I shall then assess the impact of his views and go on to make some comments on what all this tells us about the strengths and, perhaps more significantly, the limitations of Richmond as an analyst of naval affairs of his time.

First a word on "arms control." This is a postwar term and Richmond himself would not have recognized it. It is often confused, especially on the American

¹ *The Times*, 21 and 22 November 1929; see also Barry Hunt, *Sailor Scholar, Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond 1871–1946*, (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1982) pp. 197–98.

² Hunt, *Ibid.* pp 198–205; the letter from Sir Oswyn Murray is in the Richmond Papers, RIC 7/2, Folder 3 at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

³ Letter to Churchill of 22 May 1930, third folder RIC 7/2.

side of the Atlantic, with disarmament, which is an overlapping but not identical concept. Disarmament means “the reduction or abolition of armaments”: “arms control” is “restraint internationally exercised on armaments policy, whether in respect to the level of armaments, their character, deployment or use.”⁴ The logic of disarmament is that weapons are bad and ought to be reduced if not abolished; the logic of arms control is that weapons, kept in some agreed balance by treaty, can produce increased security for their owners and thus be good. Richmond’s concept of “arms reduction” reflected the contemporary preoccupation with disarmament that reflected the traumas of 1914–18. It was, however, also a form of arms control in that he was searching for a formula which might allow the navies of his day—and those of the British Empire in particular—to maintain security more effectively in a world where high defence expenditures were politically and economically unwelcome to both governments and peoples. As a naval officer he could not use disarmament rhetoric of the day. As he wrote in 1931 in his major work on arms limitation, *Economy and Naval Security*, “. . . when the human element expresses itself in terms of sentimentality, to whichever pole, increase of armament or abolition of armament, it gravitates, the cause of reduction of armament is harmed.”⁵

The essence of arms control is the limitation of the potential opponent’s forces so as to allow one to restrain one’s own. Richmond fully accepted and even welcomed this basic logic. His most important idea, the replacement of the large capital ship of his day by a much smaller vessel was based explicitly on the possibility of the limitation of opposing forces. The size of a ship, he argued, “is decided solely by the size of a similar size of ship of other powers: that is, it is relative not absolute, extrinsic not intrinsic. The capital ship’s size is decided by the size of the capital ship of other powers, not the cruiser or submarine, the bomb or the mine.”⁶

Richmond had only come to espouse his small ship ideas as a result of the reality of international dialogue on the limitation of navies. In 1920 he was still in favour of the conventional capital ship. As he wrote to Admiral Henderson in December of that year, “if the other powers continually build them and develop a ship so nearly unsinkable as the modern battleship seems to be I can’t think that they’re dead for I don’t see how we are to cover our outgoing squadrons except by ships of force.”⁷ However, that very month Richmond heard from his friend Roger Bellairs that the Committee of Imperial Defence had discussed the question of possibly obtaining the agreement of other powers

⁴ Hedley Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson for the Institute for Strategic Studies, 1961) p. ix.

⁵ Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, *Economy and Naval Security* (London: Ernest Benn, 1931), p. 87.

⁶ Draft submission to the Vulnerability of the Capital Ship Committee, 1936. RIC 7/2, Folder 2.

⁷ Letter of December 1920, RIC 7/1. I am grateful to Commander Goldrick for drawing this to my attention.

to curtailing capital shipbuilding.⁸ This may well have been one factor behind Richmond's evidence to the Bonar Law Committee submitted just over a month later at the beginning of February 1921. This infuriated the Admiralty by arguing against the immediate construction of new capital ships. However, even at this time, Richmond accepted that once research had developed increased radius of action and improved methods of countering submarine attack, new big ships would have to be built.⁹ Richmond's conversion to a major reduction in size seems to have been a result of the shock wave Secretary of State Hughes' proposals at Washington inflicted on naval opinion and the clear, positive, popular reaction to those proposals. The problem for Richmond was that the proposed maximum displacement limit for future battleships, 35,000 tons, was too large. He decided to write anonymously to *The Times* as "Admiral." The letter, published on 21 November, exactly eight years before his fatal signed contribution, made a considerable impact. In it, Richmond argued that the 35,000-ton limit resulted purely from "the struggle to produce something more powerful than what is possessed by an enemy or possible enemy. This is not a military but a mechanical reason. Now that our statesmen are sitting round a table and discussing this in friendly fashion they have such an opportunity as has never occurred before. They have the people behind them."¹⁰

Yet, if Richmond accepted one basic tenet of modern arms control theory, he firmly rejected another, the concept of "parity." He wrote that at Washington parity had come "with a purely arithmetical connotation, and without any qualification attached to it. 'Parity' implies equality in some form. Equality in, or with, what? Is it equality in a purely mathematical sense? and does parity refer to quantities of force or to security? There is a wealth of difference between those ideas. *Mathematical* parity, in its actual application, can result only in *practical* superiority of one nation over another. For example, parity in naval armaments between two adjacent Powers one of whom is exposed to, and the other immune from, vital injury at sea, would place the former at the mercy of the latter. Owing to the varying conditions of nations—conditions geographical, military, economic, and commercial—parity of matériel (in the present connotation of the word) is unquestionably *imparity* of security."¹¹

Richmond argued therefore that the basic premises of the Treaties of Washington of 1922 and London of 1930 were "unsound." As he wrote to the Third Sea Lord, Sir Roger Backhouse in August 1929, "I am totally opposed to limitation of total tonnage . . . and also the limitation of the gun." Richmond asserted that national security should dictate the strength of a navy "not prestige

⁸ "In Letters, Size of Ships," 16 December 1920, RIC 6/4, "The Future of the Battleship."

⁹ "Summary of Evidence" in the copy of the report of the Capital Ship Enquiry, Appendix II, ADM 116/3610. Public Record Office (PRO), Kew.

¹⁰ *The Times*, 21 November 1921. A copy also appears in *Economy and Naval Security*, pp. 26–30.

¹¹ *Economy and Naval Security*, pp. 37–38.

as the Americans say—‘that we are a great power and are entitled to have a navy as big as any other power’: which is pernicious and absurd.” Ratios, he said, led to “bickering.” The simplest formula therefore was to limit only the tonnage of individual ships and nothing else. This tonnage was “capable of being calculated. It is the only thing that is. No-one can calculate the requirements of a navy as a whole except the individual power concerned. There is no possibility whatever of asking a scientific allocation of total tonnage. . . . It is a mathematical absurdity. And it is utterly opposed to British interests. The only scientific form of limitation is that of the ship and the only scientific basis for the size of the ship is her function: and the absolute measure (as distinguished from the relative) is the size and power and speed of the ship which is the ultimate aim of the navy to assert, and the geographical conditions—distances—in which she has to operate.”¹²

Richmond argued that this absolute measure was sufficient power “to arrest a merchant ship.”¹³ In his original “Admiral” letter of 1921, Richmond had mentioned a limit of 10,000 tons which was that of the recently concluded Versailles Treaty. He concluded by saying that this was, however based on guesswork, “it may be 6,000 or 14,000. I am sure it is not more.”¹⁴ As he refined and defended his ideas in the late 1920s, he came down to the smaller figure. By the late 1920s he was arguing that there was no reason to build ships larger than 7,000 tons. Richmond thought that such a limit, and no other, ought to be Britain’s objective in the forthcoming conference.¹⁵ “A minimum tonnage,” he argued, “which reduces to the utmost the possibility of other variations, and does not impose upon us disadvantages vis-à-vis one nation because we have had to build certain types to meet another, is the tonnage most favorable to the needs of this country. . . . A low tonnage is, therefore, an advantage to this country, not specifically against any particular power, but it enables us more economically to produce ships to meet the various interpretations which foreign nations may put upon their own needs when translated into construction.”¹⁶ Smaller ships would also require less support and smaller harbours.¹⁷ Arms control would thus increase Britain’s security. Instead, much to Richmond’s chagrin, the London Conference extended the Washington ratio system to cover cruisers and destroyers. Richmond would blame this for the inadequacies of British strength in both categories during World War Two.¹⁸

¹² Richmond to Backhouse, 24 August 1929, RIC 7/2, Folder 3.

¹³ *Economy and Naval Security*, p. 98.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁵ See papers in RIC 6/4 which also contain records of Richmond’s intensive study of the question at the Imperial Defence College.

¹⁶ Paper, “Size of Ship,” of 7 October 1927.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

In the definitive version of Richmond's views published in 1931, Richmond argued that "a fighting ship of about 6,500 tons is sufficiently large to fulfil the requirements so far as tactics and strategy are concerned . . . the simplest, most logical and—in a strategical and tactical sense—soundest formula for agreement is the limitation of the fighting ship to this size, nations being free to embody whatever characteristics they require to meet their needs." Limitation of cost per ton was, however, assessed as "desirable, practicable and fair" as a means of preventing circumvention by building unduly powerful and expensive vessels on the given displacement. Richmond had in mind the new German *Deutschland* built notionally to the Versailles limit of 10,000 tons. If this 10,000-ton limit could not be renegotiated, Richmond was still reluctantly willing to accept it for capital ships with a sub-limit of 6,500 tons for cruisers. Such cruisers were "sufficiently large to fulfil strategical and tactical needs of all nations without exception." There should be no numerical limit on them.¹⁹

The elaborate ratios of the London Treaty in Richmond's eyes were yet more manifestations of his old enemy, the "matériel" school. Maritime strategy, Richmond always rightly insisted, was a more complex business than mere numbers of ships and guns. As he had written in 1920, "I pause before I assent to the statement that a greater number of heavy ships than ourselves gives America 'command of the sea' or that the possession of an equal number on their part transfers that command to ourselves."²⁰ One had to look at the total strategic picture. In his evidence shortly afterwards to the Bonar Law Enquiry on Capital Ships in 1921, Richmond raised the ire of both First Lord and First Sea Lord by arguing that even if the Americans completed all their new battleships it was by no means clear that their more modern battle fleet would be able in war to interdict Britain's vital South American trade. Richmond convinced half the Committee, but Long, Beatty, and Churchill wrote tartly in their dissent that "Admiral Richmond's views on this question were not convincing, and it is felt he has not had the same opportunity for studying the question as the Naval Staff at the Admiralty."²¹

Writers on Richmond have tended to take his part and see him as the hero in a struggle against the technical "artisans" who dominated the Admiralty. There is, however another view which I propose to take. Richmond was just as limited as those he so strenuously criticized. His writings, both published and unpublished, reveal a lack of recognition not only of the technological nature of the naval warfare of his period but also of the economic and political dynamics of peacetime naval competition. These lacunae in his thought led him into

¹⁹ *Economy and Naval Security*, pp. 221–22.

²⁰ First draft of paper for the Bonar Law Committee, "Battleships and Submarines, Papers on the discussion in the 1920s on the subject of whether the battleship should continue to be built." RIC 13/7.

²¹ ADM 116/3610. This Admiralty Copy of the Capital Ship Reports with its marginalia makes clear the views of the Admiralty leadership. The use of the First Lord's red pencil is most telling.

pursuing a mistaken concept of naval arms limitation that was both impractical in itself and unhelpful to those struggling in adverse circumstances to maintain the naval security of the British Empire.

During Richmond's career he had commanded three all big gun battleships, including *Dreadnought* herself. Yet he seems never to have accepted the premises upon which the designs of these ships were based. Despite contacts with Arthur Pollen, he consistently denied that accurate long-range gunfire was possible. He wrote in the 1920s in his private "Comments on Criticism" that the Royal Navy should not have been pushed to long-range firings and it could not "force a decision." If the enemy could be hit at shorter range was there "not good reason to do it?"²² Richmond persistently denounced the Fisherite policy of technological superiority that lay at the heart of pre-world war one British naval policy (and which has been so brilliantly explained by Jon Sumida).²³ As he put it in 1920: "It is not too much to say that the policy of always outdistancing our competitors in size and armament has done more to weaken our power at sea than either the submarine or the aircraft."²⁴

Richmond's small ship theories were based on some remarkably unsound technical premises. He argued that small ships were less vulnerable to the bomb or torpedo than large armored ships and that more numerous better-handled small ships could overwhelm larger vessels by closing to short ranges and overwhelming them with light gunfire. His historical knowledge told against him in making these judgements. He was best informed about the "classical" age of sail, the eighteenth century, the late seventeenth and very early nineteenth. In this period the sailor was an integral part of both the ship's propulsive system and its armament. Inherent technical qualities were marginal to the performance of a ship or a fleet. Richmond was absolutely right in asserting that "what we used to aim at was making more efficient ships—better seamen, better officers, ships which could keep the sea at all times. We let the Spaniards build the *Real Felipes* and *Santissima Trinidades*."²⁵ But Richmond could not see that the inferiority of Spanish human gunners and seamen then was similar, if only in part, to a mechanical inferiority in the twentieth century. More guns and bigger ships could not make up for inferiority in skill in 1800, neither could they perhaps even as late as 1900, given the state of naval weapons. The advent of that package of technologies summed up by the term "the Dreadnought revolution" had, however, made technology itself relatively much more important, and this trend would continue as the century wore on, important though human factors would remain.

²² In RIC 6/4. See also his diary entry for 8 April 1909 when Captain of *Dreadnought*, in A. Marder, *Portrait of an Admiral* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), p. 47.

²³ Jon T. Sumida, *In Defence of Naval supremacy: Finance, Technology and British Naval Policy, 1889–1914*. (Boston and London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

²⁴ *Supra*, note 20.

²⁵ "Comments on Criticism," RIC 6/4.

Richmond was not wrong to argue that the “whole experience of war at sea” showed that “wars are won by men.” But he was wrong to elevate to the level of a *universal principle* that it was *always* “the strategy, the tactics, the skill of seamen and gunners, which decide the issue.” Richmond dismissed out of hand the view “that weapons are the most important element in victory”; this was a “false” theory “to which no student of war has ever subscribed, natural though it is for the ‘technical expert,’ to be deluded into belief in it.” Mahan was quoted approvingly in his argument that, “Historically, good men with poor ships are better than poor men with good ships; over and over again the French Revolution taught the lesson, which our own age, with its rage for the last new thing in material improvement, has largely dropped out of memory.”²⁶ Alas for both Richmond and Mahan, the impact of the Industrial Revolution on twentieth century sea power made it necessary to treat the lessons of the French Revolution period less dogmatically. Superior skill was still important, and still sometimes decisive, but less consistently so than in the age of sail.

To be fair to Richmond, one must state that the precise context of the remarks immediately above was discussion of the idea of a limitation on cost per ton. He was arguing that cheating on *this* would not give decisive superiority. This was proved at the Battle of the River Plate when three ships of “Richmond” displacement took on and defeated a larger ship built to appear, at least, to comply to a 10,000-ton limitation and which had numerous vulnerabilities as a result. Indeed, Richmond’s ideas might have worked at a technical level if everyone had been willing to scrap their existing capital ships and start all over again. But Richmond was not so unrealistic as to argue for this. He argued that the old “mastodons” would continue until they wore out.²⁷ Richmond accepted that these ships would be around for some time, and indeed be rebuilt to improve their power, but he never fully thought through the operational implications of this. Given the available technology of the 1920s and ’30s, only large capital ships provided a certain answer to others of their kind. This required new capital ships, at least, to stand some chance of fighting a *Magato* or a *Colorado*. It is difficult to imagine Richmond’s 6,500-ton six-inch armed ships being able to do so. To argue thus, moreover, was not just simplistic materialism. As the super *Dreadnoughts* wasted away, the remaining old battleships might not always be available where the potential enemy’s might be. And Richmond himself placed no faith in the aircraft or the submarine to provide alternative counters.²⁸

The Admiralty had pointed to these and related problems in the memorandum submitted to the Cabinet in December to refute “Admiral’s” letter:

²⁶ *Economy and Naval Security*, p. 141.

²⁷ Draft of the “Admiral” letter in RIC 7/2, Folder 3.

²⁸ Richmond’s opposition to the aircraft carrier was especially remarkable, see the papers in RIC 6/4.

It should be borne in mind, in considering this question generally that the experience of war clearly proved, in action between vessels of different size, the smaller ship was destroyed without being able to inflict any appreciable damage on the larger.

It therefore follows that if the principal Naval Powers limit the tonnage of their replacement ships to 10,000 tons they would be at the mercy of any small Power outside the agreement who elected to build ships of, say 20,000 tons. Furthermore it would be necessary to scrap all existing capital ships as the replacement ships would be easily destroyed by them, being their inferiors in everything but the ability to run away.²⁹

“Admiral” had also welcomed Hughes suggested ten-year “Holiday” in capital ship construction. This was diametrically opposed to Admiralty thinking that emphasized the need to keep as much industrial infrastructure as possible for the future. Richmond may have been logically correct to argue that “the fear that armour-plate firms and other will suffer is a case of putting the cart before the horse. Navies do not exist to keep armour-plate firms in existence, but the reverse is the case. Moreover, by reducing the size of the ship, the call for armour plates is sensibly diminished.” However, as Andrew Gordon has pointed out, those reductions in industrial infrastructure that took place had a major impact on Britain’s capacity to react when strategic circumstances changed for the worse.³⁰ Sea power in the machine age cannot be turned on and off like a tap. This was no longer the eighteenth century when the press gang and naval stores could rapidly mobilize a fleet of combat worthy vessels kept in ordinary.

Richmond’s overemphasis on the past was also evident in his worries about the mass scrapping of older ships that was implied by America’s Washington proposals. As he wrote to Keyes at the end of November 1921, “If we are pressed by the Yankees into destroying these old ships we are going to weaken ourselves in respect of one of the great factors of our power—that of using the Army in combination, to hit the enemy where we can do him damage and he cannot . . . for goodness sake do not let us do something which is going to hamper our power of striking in this manner.”³¹ The effect on the overstretched Admiralty budget or the active fleet of keeping large numbers of obsolete battleships fit only for use as auxiliaries either in commission or reserve was not considered.

The above views reflected Richmond’s flawed ideas on the economic and peacetime dynamics of twentieth century naval competition. Just as he never came to grips with fundamental technical changes in modern naval warfare, he found it hard to come to terms with Britain’s fundamentally changed position

²⁹ Paper 297-B of 2 December 1921 in ADM 116/3445. The document was signed by Oliver, the Second Sea Lord in the absence of Beatty in Washington.

³⁰ G.A.H. Gordon, *British Sea Power and Procurement Between the Wars* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

³¹ Richmond to Keyes, 30 November 1921, RIC 7/2 Folder 3.

in the world. *Economy and Naval Security* makes some extraordinary assertions, that “no competition took place” after the Naval Defence Act of 1899 and that competitive building “only began when it was generated by that exuberant ambition, personal vanity, and almost childishly distorted vision which find outward expression in the marginal notes of the German Emperor.”³² Given this remarkable demonstration of ignorance of the very real pressure felt by the Admiralty in the 1890 and early 1900s from Russia and France, it is easy to understand why Richmond found it hard to understand Fisher’s policies.³³ Moreover this misconception fundamentally flawed his recommendations that such unilateral declarations of naval strength as the “two power standard” would meet general acceptance and not provide pressure for competitive building.

Simplest though they were, the system of ratios did place some cap on any potential naval arms race. Indeed, in *Economy and Naval Security*, he reluctantly admits that the Washington ratios did have some rationale.

In the circumstances of the Washington Conference there was much to say for this expedient. It was not ill-adapted to the conditions of the moment, when what was needed was a means, however irrational, however ill adapted to permanent use, to stop that flood of expenditure and ill will with which the maritime nations were then threatened. It should, however have been made clear to statesmen that, although this expedient was effective for the emergency, as an old waistcoat may serve to plug a hole in a leaking tank, it was far too unscientific, far too little related to realities, to serve as a perpetual principle for limitation.³⁴

It is far from clear, however that Richmond’s own more “scientific” principle would have solved the problems that the Washington ratios addressed. Richmond, who did not recognize that Britain had been unable to compete with her major rivals in existing types twenty years before, overestimated Britain’s ability to compete in smaller capital ships in the 1920s and 30s. Adopting Richmond’s views might well have opened the floodgates to numerical competition in the new cheap capital ships and this might have had serious political and economic effects and would certainly not have been in Britain’s interest. Richmond’s preferred system to obtain arms race stability was a system of unilateral statements of intended policy which would be based on the maritime interests to be defended by each nation. Richmond did not grapple with the problem of the interpretation of interests being different. Indeed he came round reluctantly to the idea of a ration for 10,000-ton capital ships, although he did not call it that. He argued that Versailles dictated Germany’s strength of eight ships and that therefore an agreed “yardstick” for other powers would be France ten, Italy ten,

³² *Economy and Naval Security*, p. 16.

³³ One of the most important parts of Professor Sumida’s thesis is the explanation of British rivalry with France and Russia in this period, *op. cit.* Part I.

³⁴ *Economy and Naval Security*, p. 36.

Japan twelve, and USA and Britain twenty. Other ships would not however be limited.³⁵

Richmond was strangely idealistic about the ability of nations to define their naval strength in ways that were acceptable to their rivals. Like all British naval officers of his generation he found the American insistence on parity with Britain in all warship types both illogical and illegitimate, the victory of emotion over intellect. He hoped in 1929 that his small ship proposals would “throw a bombshell into their camp” at London: “. . . I find it hard to believe,” he wrote, “that in the face of logic, of economy, if not pride (-I might even say decency if that could be relied upon) they could stand out against the proposal.”³⁶ The Americans, much more committed to large ships than the British, would have given the idea short shrift indeed.

If Richmond had problems gauging the views of naval establishments, he found it impossible to think down to the level of politicians and publics. Although he was probably right in his strategic assessment that a U.S. Navy built up to the levels envisaged before Washington might not have threatened Britain’s sea communications to the extent thought by the Naval Staff, he certainly underestimated the impression that an American fleet of sixteen-inch-gun capital ships might have had on the perceptions in the Dominions and elsewhere of Britain’s world position. The Admiralty, arguing in 1920 for four sixteen-inch ships were surely right to point out that “the rest of the world . . . will recognize who is first and who is second” if Britain’s best ships only carried fifteen-inch guns and there was only one ship the size of most of units of the American fleet.³⁷

Richmond accurately pointed out that the existing system of limitation—as well as compromising Britain’s cruiser strength to American demands—diverted competition into other channels rather than abolishing it completely. It had not given “any assurance of economy by preventing competition. Competition—ingenuity, design, organisation—cannot be eliminated from a practical world, and it is far from improbable that the result of the rationing system has led to expenditure rather than economy. A nation, knowing it is going to be called upon to state its needs in writing, by which statement—reduced in all probability in subsequent bargaining—it will *in perpetuo* be bound, will not be inclined to state its needs at the lowest figure. Besides making allowance for what will be trimmed off its estimates in compromises by means of which political agreements are usually reached, it has to make further allowance for errors in its own estimate to allow a ‘margin of safety’ comparable to that allowed by engineers in the use of material. It will prefer to risk having too much to having too little and later on, a Government may not improbably find itself constrained by the pressure of public opinion to build up to that predetermined figure, whether or not the

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 137–38.

³⁶ *Supra*, note 12.

³⁷ CP 2176, “Naval Policy and Construction,” ADM 116/3610.

political or other conditions in reality demand that building. This is not economy."³⁸

Washington had indeed spawned a cruiser that was too large and expensive for Britain's needs and, even as Richmond wrote, London was creating the monster "light" cruiser which Britain would have to counter with larger and more expensive cruisers of her own. Japan, as well as building up to treaty limits, used the treaties to emphasize investment in new capabilities that were not limited. Partly for this reason her navy was very offended by the inferiority implied by her acceptance of the 1930 London ratios for cruisers and destroyers. This came as no surprise to Richmond who had always shown considerable sympathy for French annoyance at her treatment at Washington. The American record was more mixed, but in the 1930s the treaty limitations were indeed used to stimulate naval construction and expenditure.

During the 1930s, naval expenditure "bottomed out" and began to rise again. A new Naval Conference was due, however, in 1935, and the Admiralty began to plan for it under the leadership of its formidable new First Sea Lord, Sir Ernle Chatfield. Chatfield unfairly blamed Richmond for the navy's defeat in 1930, but his ideas were not diametrically opposed to those of his contemporary.³⁹ Chatfield clearly recognised the advantages that Britain as a fundamentally overextended imperial power would gain from limitations on the size and expense of warships, especially as general naval rearmament was in the air. The Naval Staff reduced their proposed capital ship to the minimum that could hold its own against existing types, 25,000 tons and twelve-inch guns. Cruisers would be no more than 7,000 tons and carry six-inch guns and would not be limited in numbers once ceilings had been put on numbers of the larger "Treaty" cruisers.⁴⁰ Chatfield was against the ratio system because it "struck a blow at national pride and . . . prestige." It had been "accepted by the Japanese with anger, and by France because she did not so much mind at that time as long as Italy was equally restricted." The ratio system was the subject of growing grievance in the ensuing years. Ratios were also inapplicable to cruisers, destroyers and submarines and were no longer negotiable.⁴¹ Apart from emphasizing prestige rather than security, these views were not a million miles from those of Richmond.

The potential convergence was even closer. As Chatfield later wrote,

I therefore wrote a memorandum to the first Lord urging that ratios (or quantitative limitation) should be abolished and only qualitative limitation aimed at. This meant that each nation should be free to build as many ships as it needed, but the

³⁸ *Economy and Naval Security*, p. 43.

³⁹ Lord Chatfield, *It Might Happen Again* (London: William Heinemann, 1947), p. 60.

⁴⁰ "Preparations For the 1935 Naval Conference," ADM 116/2999.

⁴¹ Chatfield, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

size of ships, the real cause of competition in past decades, should be limited in each type, to the smallest on which agreement could be reached. . . . Qualitative limitation thus became the main form of naval limitation. No country will put more money on the sea than the risks warrant, and that in itself is some considerable check on the quantity of ships a nation builds. On the other hand, if a nation builds a larger and more powerful ship than her potential adversary it acutely upsets the balance of security. It starts a race, not only in size and therefore expense but also in numbers. A new type or a bigger ship or gun causes earlier or smaller ships to be outclassed, and so this ancient habit of trying to go one better, has always been the most virulent form of naval rivalry. . . . If therefore you are not prepared to go all out in naval finance and wish for economical rearmament, the best way to ensure it is to limit, by International Law, the size of ships. It is, like all such rules, never satisfactory. It implies implicit trust in your rival not to break the rules and experience showed *that this trust was misplaced*. It was however disliked by the United States, and it was that country's wish to build very big ships, that eventually so raised the size of capital ships as to make any hope of financial saving on navies of the future unlikely.⁴²

With only a very few amendments, this could have been written by Richmond.

By 1934–35, therefore, the overlap between Richmond's views and those of the Naval Staff was considerable. It is all the more sad therefore that the two sides fought a public engagement at this time on the question of capital ship size. Richmond's continued press campaign against big ships provoked Chatfield to write a letter to *The Times* under the pseudonym "1934." Here he rehearsed an argument he had made to the Washington Delegation a dozen years before. It was precisely because British seamen were better than their potential opponents that they required solid platforms which were not subject to the vagaries of a lucky hit. The Admiralty's concern with defensive qualities in their ships was not, as Richmond argued, a reflection of misplaced strategic thinking but rather of the technical lessons of war. "1934" called on Richmond to stick to history, where he was an acknowledged expert, and leave contemporary naval affairs to those who were fully informed.⁴³

That Chatfield, who generally deprecated such public pronouncements, was moved to write to the press is an index of the malign influence Richmond had unwittingly become on the Admiralty's struggle to maintain naval security. Right from the start of Richmond's small ship crusade, he had exerted considerable influence on lay political opinion. "Admiral's" letter in 1921 had stimulated the interest of David Lloyd George and the Prime Minister had asked the Admiralty for a detailed refutation of Richmond's points, one by one. Although some of the counterarguments to Richmond reflected the contemporary misconception that large capital ships might be made absolutely rather than just relatively immune to submarine and air attack, given contemporary knowledge,

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁴³ *The Times*, 20 March 1934. Copy in National Maritime Museum, Chatfield Papers, CHT 3/1.

they were not unreasonable. They seem to have been successful in heading off the Prime Minister from throwing Richmond's proposal into the ring at Washington. There Chatfield was doing quite well in mitigating the effects of the Ten Year Naval Holiday upon which the Cabinet insisted—perhaps a little sustained by Richmond's letter which had so strongly supported it.⁴⁴

Richmond would have had more effect in the late 1920s if he had been willing to moderate his views. He corresponded freely with the main policymakers of his day who were willing to accept some further limitation in capital ships but who were unwilling to go to Richmond's extremes. Backhouse, for example, pointed out to Richmond it was the Americans not the British who wanted large ships and were determined not to allow the British "to command the seas as against neutral trade in general and theirs in particular." Britain's dependence on the sea was too great to drop straight to 7,000 tons and six-inch guns. A 17,500-ton ship with perhaps ten-inch guns might be acceptable, however.⁴⁵ Richmond, typically, took the view that one had to swallow his views whole and that movement in his direction only reflected the rightness of his position and the inability of the opponent to overcome irrational prejudice.⁴⁶

Richmond, from 1921 and his evidence to the Bonar Law Committee onwards, was playing a dangerous game. In effect, he was exploiting his position as a senior officer, and therefore someone who was supposed to know about naval affairs, to play upon the ignorance of outsiders against the professional consensus of a reformed Naval Staff. He failed to realize that the subtleties of his arguments would be ignored and that when the government agreed to an extension to the Ten Year Holiday, as it did in London, it would be coupled with other measures of which he very strongly disapproved. It was only in 1931 that Richmond was in a position to expound his views in detail and at length in *Economy and Naval Security*, and by then it was too late.

His fixation with the small ship continued to create trouble. Ramsay MacDonald was as impressed with Richmond's thinking as were Bonar Law and Lloyd George. There is little reason to disbelieve Chatfield when he reports with reference to the 1934 Cabinet discussions on new battleships: "I had to argue this question at length. The Prime Minister had . . . taken a fundamental dislike to big ships. He used all the well worn arguments, he quoted Admiral Richmond at me frequently. I said that I was the advisor and, with the Board and Staff, bore the responsibility. Gradually Mr. Macdonald came round."⁴⁷ Chatfield's problems at this time account for his placing too much responsibility on Richmond for the events of 1930. The real pity of all this was that when American pressure forced

⁴⁴ See papers in ADM 116/3445 and Chatfield's account in *op. cit.*, pp. 1-7.

⁴⁵ Backhouse to Richmond, 20 August 1929, RIC 7/2, Folder 3. Drax also proposed "climbing down slowly" with a 20,000-ton interim limit in a letter of 19 December.

⁴⁶ See comments in *Economy and Naval Security*, p. 33.

⁴⁷ Chatfield, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

the British to increase the 1936 London Treaty limitations to 35,000 tons and fourteen-inch guns, Richmond testified to the Cabinet Committee on the Vulnerability of Capital ships in support of the construction of "ships of similar type, not unduly inferior, in such numbers as we see fit, to meet the similar ships thus pressed upon nations by the United States."⁴⁸ In a decade and a half the wheel had come full circle with Richmond supporting Admiralty policy on capital ships. It is sad that the Admiralty and Richmond could not have settled their differences sooner, to the benefit of both.

Richmond's views on arms control are interesting in that they demonstrate the care that must be taken in accepting unquestioningly the advice of both the naval officer and the academic historian on contemporary policy issues. Richmond obtained his influence in a wider world because he was a sea officer, and one who had reached high rank. It was assumed therefore that he was an expert on all aspects of naval operations and warfare. In fact, Richmond had deliberately distanced himself from the naval mainstream and those that were grappling with the enormous problems posed by rapid technological progress. Richmond argued that the "truths" of naval warfare were to be found in the lessons of the past and nowhere else. To a remarkable degree he tried to wish away contemporary technical developments. He comprehensively denied the utility of long-range action, aircraft, and submarines. What he would have made of computers, satellites, guided missiles, and nuclear power is anyone's guess. Reading Richmond one senses a yearning to return to the primitive ironclads and short range tactics of his youth—if not for the sailing ship and smooth bore cannon of the periods he understood better than his own. A good argument can be made therefore that it was Richmond, not any of the "materialists" he inveighed against who was the true reactionary. Certainly to argue, as Richmond often did, that technology changes nothing is as bad as any materialist falling into the equal, opposite, more common, and very dangerous trap of arguing that technology changes everything. Richmond threw out the baby of operational understanding with the oily bath water of technological determinism. This was especially tragic; if anyone of his time ought to have been able to take the broad view and create a synthesis of the conflicting factors it was a "sailor-scholar" such as he.

The complexities of contemporary naval warfare are such that it is understandable that most officers get tied up in them and ignore the higher elements of their profession. Time, and more importantly perhaps, intellectual energy, have other pressing demands upon them. Equally, too, many traditional naval historians—perhaps with more excuse than Richmond—have not been careful enough to acquire a sufficiently detailed knowledge of the technical aspects of naval warfare. (The drawbacks of the overspecialized English educational system

⁴⁸ Draft of evidence, RIC 7/2, Folder 2.

are a particular handicap here.) Naval policy is such, however, that unless one has a thorough grasp of its technical nature and dynamics—and indeed its economic as well as political foundations—it is difficult to draw accurate conclusions that are of use to the contemporary maker of it. Richmond was right to argue that lessons can be drawn from history. Where he was wrong was in trying to arrive at them from too narrow a perspective. Perhaps, however, his problems vindicate another of his hobby horses. The naval education system of his time had fundamental drawbacks and needed reform; it did not encourage the breadth of view and intellectual tolerance that officers so badly needed—even exceptionally gifted officers like Herbert Richmond. But that, as the saying goes, is another story.

Discussion of the Papers Written by Professor Geoffrey Till and Mr. Eric Grove

Rear Admiral Hill: What I am going to say is based largely on *The Naval Review* discussion of the size of the fighting ship. Although initiated by Richmond, it was almost certainly at the instigation of Sir William Henderson in August 1929, that is to say, before Richmond wrote the letters to *The Times*, but it goes to what I said yesterday; I think Richmond was, by that time, on the cusp. He had realized that he was not going to be reemployed and he reckoned he had nothing to lose. He wrote an initial, very long article. It was interesting, particularly from somebody who had just come from the IDC, because it pitched straight in. It made no attempt to set the scene or anything like that. It did not state its assumptions, but the underlying assumption was, undoubtedly, that an arms control agreement was going to be possible at the 1930 conference and that it would be honored. It was a highly prescriptive article that put forward his case for fighting ships limited to 7,000 tons. He mentioned six-inch guns at a certain place, although he later said that they could be of a larger caliber in certain sub-classes of that general ship class.

There are one or two particularly interesting things—he says that, “of course, if you limited fighting ships to that size there wouldn’t be any room for aircraft carriers, but they weren’t necessary anyway.” Later on during the discussion, which I shall go into in a little more detail, he said this, “Aircraft may, it will be said, win the battle from the shore. The idea is a pretty one.” Crete was ten years away. I think I need say no more on that. On submarines, he is again rather inclined to be dismissive, but mostly on the grounds that Eric has put forward, that more agile ships were able to evade submarines and therefore it did not matter much. As for the defense of convoys, Richmond, in other places in *The Naval Review*, talked about the defense of trade and, in passing, against submarines, although mainly he was against surface raiders. Everyone must remember that 90 percent of the concentration was on surface raiders and 10 percent on submarines in the thinking of that time, when the Battle of the Atlantic was ten years away. Richmond was not alone in this, but he was no prophet; that’s my main point.

There is one other point about submarines in his discussions on the “Freedom of the Seas.” Again, in *The Naval Review*, Richmond said, “Well, of course, submarines are now limited by international law. Before they sink a merchant ship, they must place the crew in a place of safety and so on and so forth.” It reminds me of that old Jacobean play the “Changeling,” where a woman hires

a particularly unsavory character to bump off her husband and the character says, “Yes, on certain conditions,” and you can guess what the conditions were. The woman says, “Why, it is impossible, Larkins, to be so wicked.” Richmond was supported by certain sycophants (whom I will not identify here), in supplementary articles, about the size of the fighting ship—most of whom agreed to it. The opposition started in the next issue, and those who opposed him, to a more or less extent, included Drax, Fuller, Danckwerts, the Head of the Royal Naval Corps of Constructors, R.P. Miles, and a man called Gerald Dickens, who later became an admiral and, in fact, edited *The Naval Review*. Of these, Drax said, “Well, they can be smaller, but not that much smaller,” and made a lot of very good points, in his diplomatic way. Danckwerts, the RCNC chap, and Miles, all made points which pointed in the same direction as Jack Drax’s, but the two people who really went for Richmond were Fuller, as X, and Dickens, who wrote an article called “The Fallacy of the Small Ship.” Fuller said, in effect, “Look here, the air is here; it’s here to stay. You’re not going to stop technological change. This is a Law of Nature and you’re talking rubbish, basically.” Dickens wrote a most prophetic set of conclusions including “The Next Capital Ship Is the Aircraft Carrier.”

It was for those two, Fuller and Dickens, that Richmond reserved his invective. His method of answering is, I think, indicative at least of his state of mind at the time, and possibly it really sums up what Eric was saying, because he nitpicked at enormous lengths on small points and did not answer the big ones. It really does not read very well. It is sarcastic, it is scathing, and, as I say, it destroys points in detail, but it glosses over or does not answer many of the bigger ones, including the crucial matter of the air. It stresses clearly to me that Richmond had been completely prejudiced by the overemphasis on the air by the Trenchard-educated Air Force officers he had encountered at the Imperial Defence College in the previous two years; he overreacted to it. He said, “The air’s got no real future. It is a pretty notion. End of story.” It seems to me, to sum up, Mr. Chairman, that this is a rather extreme example of a person who had trained himself in history and had taken a very historical view, with a wealth of historical examples from the days of sail becoming prescriptive; perhaps that is a warning to us all.

Eric Grove: Just to make a brief point on submarines—he did latch on to a statement made by a French politician who had said that, “if these awful Washington ratios are taken away, then we may ban the submarine as a tradeoff.” He did sometimes quote that because he was in favor of banning the submarine. After all, even though they were not much good against warships, there was a possibility they might be used against merchant ships in the future, and therefore, it would be a good idea to ban them, if one got rid of the ratios. This came into

his writings as “The French have suggested that . . .,” when in fact it was what just one French politician had said, and it was overstated.

Geoffrey Till: I think on this point, there is a rather interesting passage that he wrote in his diary during the First World War. I cannot remember the full details, but it goes along the lines of some of his arguing that the technical obsessions of the Admiralty, at the time, were leading them to forget strategic purposes. It was something to the effect that my ideas on this might be completely wrong [yes, they were], but has anybody looked at it from the grand strategic point of view. He thought that people were too obsessed by the technical and the tactical reality. I think that kind of impatience with technical reality was something that we had a substantial problem with all the way into the war period. His arguments about the size of ships paid virtually no regard to the defensive requirements that were more easily achieved with a bigger sort of ship. He did not think it was important for ships to have anti-torpedo protection. He did not think it was important for ships to have heavy armour for antiaircraft protection, because as you both said, he tended to underestimate the threat that these sorts of weapons had, and, therefore, the requirements to deal with them were not particularly important. It was an argument of pure strategic logic that was almost wilfully blind to the technical realities of the time. It’s a dreadful warning to all historians not to get into areas that they cannot understand.

Alan Pearsall: I was going to ask how many other supporters Richmond had in his small ship theory, because there was Captain Vernon Ackworth, who produced a book, sometime in the early thirties I think, who actually produced probably better proposals than Richmond. He proposed ships of about 12,000 to 15,000 tons with six twelve-inch guns, and armored cruisers, not with the Washington eight-inch gun but with old British caliber of 9.2-inch guns. These were of quite interesting designs, but I do not know how far he had worked them out, although they are illustrated in the book he produced.

There was certain dissatisfaction with the British Treaty cruisers built in the mid-1920s. They were 10,000 tons with very little armour, which makes nonsense of the Admiralty’s care for the armored plate companies and eight eight-inch guns. They compared unfavorably with foreign cruisers, although a similar type. We, of course, built about thirteen altogether, then immediately reverted to smaller cruisers in the 1930s. With that exception, I would just like to ask how much other support Richmond commanded beyond the individuals Admiral Hill mentioned.

Eric Grove: There were some supporters. I found that when he did his work on this at the Imperial Defence College, there was one captain, his name escapes

me at the moment, who wrote a lecture very much in support of Richmond's ideas.

Ackworth is a very interesting example. Yes, he was on the same wave length as Richmond, but Richmond did not think much of him. He thought Ackworth was another matériel man and he dismissed his ideas. The general problem was that if you went along with Richmond part of the way, like Backhouse did and, indeed, the Admiralty did, and say something like, "we want smaller ships," or "smaller ships do make sense," but you were not willing to go as far as Richmond, he would treat that as a vindication of his logic and say you were stupid in not following on to the proper conclusion.

It was actually quite difficult to be a friend of Richmond unless you were willing to accept the whole package, and that was a real problem. He wouldn't moderate himself, and I find that really quite tragic.

Geoffrey Till: I think what we are talking about is a spectrum of opinion. Richmond was one end of the spectrum, arguing for very small capital ships. Ackworth, if I remember correctly, was arguing for capital ships of about 12,500 tons. You have the sort of progressive equal in the Admiralty, itself, talking that 20,000 tons might be an adequate size and, then, going all the way up to the extreme Japanese who say 70,000 wouldn't be a bad starting point. Richmond had support in the sense that he was not the single source of authority on the idea that you should get ships sized down. Eric is quite right, if you did not go along exactly with what he said, you were isolated from him. He was not somebody to be with in a lobby group.

Eric Grove: He did get a lot of support in the early '20s from Custance. Custance was a strong supporter of his ideas, as you would expect.

Geoffrey Till: One thing, I think, about Vernon Ackworth is always worth repeating. He wrote two books. I can't remember the titles, but in one of them, he made a famous remark about the torpedo. If I remember correctly, it was "Take the torpedo up by the gills and look at this pretentious bug-bear squarely in the mouth." So as a materialist, he had his limit, I think.

Jon Sumida: A couple of points. As some of you may know, Richmond was a very good friend of Arthur Hungerford Pollen. They maintained a voluminous correspondence between 1916 and Pollen's death. In the Pollen files there is, I think, a remarkable memorandum, which is undated, although the internal evidence suggests it was written in 1907 or 1908, and it is by Richmond. Richmond says in this memorandum, "If you concede the principle of the lightest gun that will do the work, you must also concede the principle of the smallest number of guns that will do the work, that is the smallest ship that will

do the work. There is no tactical advantage in cramming more power into a ship than is necessary. The only advantage in it is the advantage of the smaller maintenance cost.” That could have been written in the 1920s. Richmond had this concept before the First World War and, going further in this memorandum, it is fairly clear that he finds the *Invincible* class a very interesting kind of ship, because he sees the *Invincibles* as stripping armor, emphasizing speed and gun power, which is the offensive and what Richmond is aiming for, even in 1907–1908. This is, perhaps, why he underestimates the importance of protection. He simply thinks that what you really want to do is cultivate the offensive and that should be part and parcel of the kind of ships that you build.

On another point, because Richmond was often in correspondence with Pollen, it raises the interesting question of why would he therefore be conservative on the issue of long-range firing, because, of course, Pollen is the prophet on long-range firing. It has been a long time since I’ve looked at this material, but I think that you have to remember that Richmond was Assistant Director of Naval Ordnance in 1910, at the time when the Pollen crisis was really heating up. As for Dreyer’s nasty remarks about Richmond, we should remember that Richmond was very much a part of that group in the Ordnance Department that turned down the Dreyer Table in 1910 and supported Pollen. My guess is that Richmond was not simply opposed to long-range firing; he saw the mess that long-range fire control got into in the procurement process that Pollen and Dreyer fought. Perhaps the more accurate way to say it is that he thought it might have been theoretically possible to get long-range firing, but the Royal Navy did not get it. It was a disaster, and perhaps they shouldn’t have tried so hard to go to the very edge of technology. That is a slightly different way of looking at Richmond’s opposition to technology. I am not sure if his was of an antediluvian reaction or a pure and simple one. He had firsthand experience in looking at what happens when you try to go to the state of the art.

My last comment is that Pollen did write to someone else about Richmond and the phrase went something like this: “Isn’t it odd that the swells (he was referring here to Corbett and Richmond) did not understand the essentials of gunnery technology upon which all tactics must be based.” This interesting comment was written in the 1920s.

Eric Grove: That is a very interesting point and I must admit that before I finalize the paper I will think this through and have a look at some more evidence. I think what I would argue at the moment is that perhaps at that time Richmond was, as you say, more connected with the mainstream of technology. He was more into with what was going on, but certainly the flavor of the remarks in the twenties, it’s “Baby is in the bath water” again. He just seems to have come out against the thing in principle, and I did get the impression that his views got more extreme and more dogmatic as time went by. That might well be the fact,

but certainly I'm thinking back to the stuff I was looking at—what he was writing in the twenties as his own think-pieces. One reason he's against aircraft is not just because of the bombing; he says, "The one problem with aircraft is that they will encourage people to think that long-range fire is possible at extreme ranges." I agree this is a different point, but I think that he used the rational arguments against very long-range fire to come out against the whole concept of longish-range engagements. But you could say, what is long?

Jon Sumida: Maybe I should add here that that was a major debate in the Royal Navy at the time. There was agreement in the Royal Navy that they could not fire at maximum ranges. For one thing, for financial reasons, you can't modernize the battleships and give them the higher elevation mountings or give them fire control systems. Perhaps Richmond was not being truly reactionary here. He's suggesting that, in the twenties and the thirties, engagements should take place at moderate long range, say 18-22,000 yards, and that is actually where the Royal Navy came down by the end of the thirties.

Hervé Coutau-Bégarie: I think that these comments are very expressive of the nature of the debate on arms control between the wars in the British and American circles. It was discussion in technical matters, and I think that Richmond, like the others, failed completely to understand the cyclical dimension of the negotiations for the other powers. Arms control was a discussion of three partners—British, American and Japanese. The French were outside the naval discussion and were treated in Washington as a second-rate power. The agreement was defined between the three delegations and France had to agree to something negotiated without her. She hoped to have two-thirds of the major powers, Britain and the United States, but she obtained only one-third and a parity with the Italian Navy. This, she was absolutely unable to accept. The result was that France said, "If I am a weak Navy, I will use the weapon of the weak: a refusal to discuss the limitation on the submarine. I have only that and then it is absolutely impossible to obtain any agreement with such promise. The difference between the Washington and London treaty negotiations was that, in Washington, the French delegates were completely unprepared. At that time there was a General Staff, but so weak that it did not exist. There was no section for the preparation of negotiations and so on. The delegates arrived in Washington without anything. They were completely surprised. When the delegates arrived in London in 1930, they had everything prepared. The French case was well argued and it was impossible for British and Americans to repeat the scenario of Washington. I think the result was something that Richmond and others did not understand and the result was disastrous. From a technical point of view, Washington was a success with very important limitations, but from a political point of view, it was a disaster. From the continental balance of

power point of view, it was the beginning of the process which would lead to the axis between Italy and Germany. I think that it is a dimension which might be found also with Japan.

Eric Grove: Richmond, in fact, would have been very sympathetic with what you just said. He does say quite a bit in the twenties—that the great problem of the ratio system has been that it alienated France. In fact, he very much sympathized with French views on this. It was one of his big arguments against the ratio system and saw it as one of the great problems that he was railing against in his new completely different formula for naval protection.

Commander McCoy: I'm proposing to shift target from Herbert Richmond and Eric Grove to Corbett and Geoffrey Till. Professor Fairbanks, this morning, predicted that there would be no great global war for a hundred years, during which time the military structures of which we are all, or were, a part, will wither. Last night Guy Liardet mentioned, the now, I hope, discredited Francis Fukiyama, on the end of history. Recently in the International Institute, we were exposed to the remarkable thinking of a chap called Martin van Creveld and his book on *Future War*. He says we have not reached the end of history (as I suggest events in Yugoslavia now indicate), but we may have reached the end of military history. His theory on future war is allied with those which perhaps not many here will have seen. Brian Betterman, the economist, wrote, a couple of weeks ago, that for naval forces, at any rate, in any of these future scenarios, the crystal ball is unclear. In particular, one is struck at the moment by the gesture of politics, of squadrons representing different sets of European initials, marching and counter-marching to no particular purpose in the Adriatic and devaluing, in my view, the whole purpose of having naval forces.

I would like to ask Geoff—we've heard very useful ideas of where Corbett could help us pick out what is valid and what is not valid—I would like to ask him and the other eminent historians gathered here: where else may we look to obtain some focus in this very foggy crystal ball?

Geoffrey Till: Can I pick up on one of your comments, Jim? You said that the naval maneuvering going on in the Adriatic was (I noted down your phrase) "to no particular purpose." That may well be true in so far as actually having an effect and improving a situation in former Yugoslavia. It seems to me that that's not really the agenda. What the agenda is, is what I and other people have tended to call coalition building. What we are seeing is, I think, a transition of the alliance system and the function of navies in this kind of environment to what you call gesture politics. In other words, these operations demonstrate to other allies what a particular country can offer, and demonstrate support, perhaps, in one alliance format *vis-à-vis* another. As far as the naval officers actually

conducting these operations are concerned, I can well understand that they would be very impatient and that they would think that they had not joined the service to be kind of uniformed *mettaniks* in this sort of politicking. It is not something that comes readily. I can understand and sympathize with all that, but it does seem to me to be naval activity in support of diplomacy. The problem is that, because of the uncertain state of the current world, the diplomacy is uncertain. We are not sure what sort of world we are shifting to. We are not sure, therefore, what the role of the military in this new world is actually going to be. We are in a revolution-in-transition period. As to where we are going to end up, I have a lot of sympathy with what I think is underlying your point. I suspect that we are not about to break into the sunlit uplands, where conflict is over and the military can pack up their kit-bags and go into the nearest museum. I think that is a long way off. But what form they are going to take is, at the moment, extremely uncertain. Absolutely top of the heap, as far as I'm concerned, is the role that the military and the navy have in supporting diplomacy.

Edward S. Miller. A question for Eric on Richmond as a grand strategist. In 1921 he said, "The large United States Navy was pernicious." What would he have said in 1941?

Eric Grove: Times change, and times did change actually. What is interesting about 1921 is that the scenario war with the United States was the scenario used by the Bonar Law Inquiry. Some of the most interesting thinking available, in the documents, are some that I have seen on the war with the United States in the Bonar Law Inquiry—where they go into detail. Can we use Bermuda as a base and this kind of thing. Richmond himself did a lot of thinking about the tactics and strategy (more of the strategy than tactics) on a war with the United States in the 1920s. There is no doubt that the United States Navy was seen, if not as a realistic potential enemy, at least as a strategic problem by the Royal Navy in the 1920s and a strategic problem that was kept in check by arms control. The desire by the United States for a navy equal in size to that of the United Kingdom, to that of the British Empire, was regarded as a problem. If you asked a British naval officer in the 1920s, "What is your biggest problem?" he would have said that the Americans wanted to have a navy the size of ours, particularly in cruisers. That was the big, overwhelming problem. The American desire to bring our cruiser total down to theirs was, perhaps, the most difficult problem with which the Admiralty had to deal.

Chatfield, when he was Third Sea Lord acting in Beatty's name (on his own initiative actually), went to see Baldwin at the time of the 1927 Geneva Conference and dissuaded Baldwin from giving in to the Americans' competition. It is a dominant theme in Richmond's thinking in the 1920s: the problem about the American desire for parity in cruisers.

Edward S. Miller: What did he say in the 1940s?

Eric Grove: Other people are probably better capable of answering that question than myself. Can I say, as a general point, one should not read history backwards, in that sense. It seems to me that one can see why this was so, in the 1920s, given the American lack of willingness to live up to its reputation after the headquarters had created the picture of the United States as a potential problem. It was really only the desperation of not being able to square our strategic circles that, shall we say, forced us into making what agreements we could with this rather unreliable country across the seas. Those were the terms used by the decision makers at the time, and we must not ignore them now for the sake of modern Anglo-American relations. These were the terms that were used in the 1940s, and a lot of extraordinary things happened that changed the situation fundamentally. In the 1920s and the early 1930s, the U.S. Navy was not a potential ally; it was a conceivable enemy and it was a real strategic problem.

Geoffrey Till: This raises a very interesting issue. We have been talking about a set of strategists who think of the navy as an actor. In other words, it is an instrument that makes things happen. It is a cause of other effects, and usually this is right. But sometimes, this is only half the story. I think what Richmond did not fully grasp was that naval expansion or naval decline can, at least, be a symptom of what is going on. He tended to interpret the American desire for naval parity as a kind of unnecessary bit of public posturing by the United States, causing unnecessary friction with the natural mistress of the seas. What he did not see, what he did not recognize, was that the American demand for parity was a kind of symptom of its growth to superpower status in terms of the 1920s. It was an inevitable function of the growth of its military power: it was political prestige and all the rest of it. I think this tendency to concentrate on what could be seen as an unnecessary policy, simply engaged in as a whim, was a function of their failure to understand the way national politics actually work.

Eric Grove: That quotation about sentimentality was very much in the context of the growth of the American navy. Like most British naval officers, Richmond regarded, certainly in the twenties and the thirties, the American quest for their navy as mere sentimentality. Now, that may seem very odd from this side of the Atlantic, but that was the way it seemed to us at the time. The evidence is overwhelming; it's just there.

Daniel Baugh: I would like to begin by contributing an answer to the question that Ed Miller raised, but also to the panel's comments as to what Richmond thought pernicious, in the sense that it was nonfunctional. Go back to that word "function" in Richmond. It is, as you have shown, Eric, in your paper, really

at the center of the reasoning which, to be sure, carries him to extremes, but it is also the reasoning in his arms control proposals. So, the United States's big navy, second to none, is, in Richmond's eyes, nonfunctional. From what I can tell of his writings during the twenties and thirties (this answers the 1940s question, as well), he could not picture the United States and Great Britain as adversaries in the sea war. Maurice Hankey couldn't either, and that is one of the reasons why Maurice Hankey is so upset in the late twenties about Colonel Edward House and the gang trying to get rid of belligerent rights. If you have the combination of all those, the limitation of British cruisers, and a very large American fleet, and then you tell the British that they are not going to have the power of belligerent rights, as Richmond himself wrote in the twenties, Great Britain no longer has the capacity to use her navy in an offensive manner. There is no offensive power left. Then you have to make Britain into a military power. It may be extreme reasoning, but there is a lot of thought behind it.

I would like, as Eric has been warned, to address some of the things he said in his paper. There are quite a few where I do not think the arguments are consistent, but they are not major points. I would like to say, at the outset, what I did say in my paper, and I will reaffirm it here even more: Richmond is not at his best when he is talking on technical matters. His whole object in life was to try to prevent naval officers from confining their sights to technical matters, mathematics, machinery, ships, guns: the whole business. He did address them and he was not ignoring them, but he's not at his best. I do agree with your point about his disagreement with Chatfield; it's quite silly. What Admiral Hill has said about his state of mind and the way in which he positions his prose when he is talking about this in the early thirties: it does seem, at this period in his life, Richmond had gone over the top.

I would ask the following two questions: In 1921, wasn't there a fallacy of the large ship just as much as there was a fallacy of the small ship? Richmond, as you state in your paper, Eric, is aware of the fact, and, here, I think, he very powerfully comes historical on a technological point. There is an article in *The Naval Review* on the battleship of the twentieth century in 1920 not being the battleship of the eighteenth century, because it is not invulnerable and it has not got the range of the earlier ship. Those qualifications are not in your paper and, it seems to me, it might be a very reasonable argument for him to say: This is not yet the time to build large capital ships. If the Admiralty felt that they were betrayed by this kind of comment, it could well be that the Admiralty's strategic procurement judgment was incorrect.

Another point that I would like to make is that I, myself, use the phrase "small ship." What Richmond meant, and this is in the context of his argument in arms control (here I think he is very sane), is that he wanted many, many, many ships. If you are going to have a few large ships built up to the tonnages that the ratios allowed, it would probably mean turning the direction of the naval budget away

from building for the needs of the British Empire. Now, I would think that, of itself, it would be a sound argument, but technically you can run the argument in a number of ways. This gets into the business of predicting the next war and some very interesting things have been said in the morning session about predicting the next war and not being too prescriptive about it. What I would point out here is that I think it is unfair to run Richmond's small ship ideas against the large aircraft carrier. I do not think that was an opposition that was current in the debate. I do not think that is the way in which the British Admiralty, or anybody in the hierarchy, positioned the debate over large versus small ships. Yes, when it came to new technology, he seems to have hardened his prejudices, but I think that we should not, unfairly, retrospectively, impose conditions on the debate that were not there in the early 1930s.

Eric Grove: I certainly was trying not to impose retrospective conditions, because one of my hobby horses (one of the many, I suppose) is that one must not read history backwards, and one must always look at things as they appeared at the time. To take your points in order: yes, one can see, in fact, that there were reasons, and not all the Admiralty's arguments were sound, I agree, but I think this leads on to quite a fundamental point, particularly when you are discussing arms control. Perhaps, I did not make it as strongly in the paper as I ought to have done. Where we are dealing with arms control, we are basically dealing with the perceptions, the peacetime perceptions, of military naval power. These are, to some extent, all about gun-sizes, tonnages, and this kind of thing. This is utterly at variance with Richmond's conception, as you so very ably put over, on what navies are all about and what ships are all about. Therefore, he was fundamentally unsympathetic to the whole concept of arms control, because it was all about, not just arms control, but also building ships to keep up with other navies in peacetime. One of the problems is that the peacetime navy is a very different thing from a wartime navy. I tried to grope at this in an article I wrote in the *Naval War College Review* (Spring 1991, pp. 82–92) on British naval rearmament in the 1930s. What was being built was a deterrent navy and not a war-fighting navy.

What the Royal Navy was very concerned with in 1920 was the fact that if it did not build sixteen-inch gun capital ships quickly, the Japanese and the Americans would both have them and these would give the Japanese and American navies the appearance, if not the reality, of being superior. Britain's political clout and her prestige would have suffered enormously. Now Richmond did not think much of prestige; he regarded it as sentimentality, you know. I think that was a real problem in his analysis of the peacetime dynamic of naval competition.

He is anti-carrier in *Economy and National Security*, a book that says, "Well, this will force them to a small size and a jolly good thing, too." So he is, in fact,

against the carrier as much as he is against the battleship. If he were around today, he would be one of the biggest enemies of the American carrier program, I suspect.

Daniel Baugh: I think you have to read the five pages, under "Objections," on the aircraft carrier very carefully. I do not read those five pages in *Economy* in the same way.

Captain Montenegro: It is a minor shift in target to a point concerning the Washington Treaty. In my perception, as an outsider and perhaps running the risk of oversimplification, I think the Washington Treaty was a sort of freeze on a position achieved. Of course, some trade-offs were made between capital ships in commission and programs: for instance, the British sacrificed a large number of ships in commission versus a more ambitious program from the United States and Japan. Of course, I know about the French displeasure with the Treaty, but I think that perhaps, given the lack in French naval construction during World War I, for obvious reasons, the French position on the number of ships in commission was reasonably weak. Perhaps it is some explanation of the result.

Rear-Admiral Liardet: I would like just to extend the thought that arose with Commander McCoy and Professor Till and ask the question "what can we deduce from the Washington Treaty process that can be referred to today?" It does seem to me that, in those days, the process of arms control was to achieve security between powers. We are now into a new scene, where we are actually under structural arms control, the force imposed upon us by the taxpayer. The next process is going to have to be one where we come to some form of alliance-building, arms-control agreement among the free powers who wish to help the planet along its process towards peace; getting our act together, getting our planning and our force postures, and so forth, integrated so that we can do these things. The arms control process cannot be expressed as being those who do the fighting verses the taxpayer, but it does seem to me that we do need to start thinking about what socks we can offer to the taxpayer before he takes them from us.

This will require some thought. What do we actually need in order to do the things that we think are desirable? We need to be able to preserve some form of reach, some form of war-fighting capability. We need to have a mutually interdependent way of proceeding. Clearly, small nations like the Dutch, the Belgians, and even the British, will not be able to do all the things that the Americans will, but to what extent shall we share these burdens? By what process do we actually get these? Because, if we do not do this, we are going to find it imposed on us. And what about the Russians and the Chinese?

Geoffrey Till: I think it, again, reinforces the point that we were talking about earlier, in which naval developments can be seen as a consequence of what is happening, rather than a cause. There are things that happen in the face of arms control, at sea, and on land that, in a sense, are a symptom of general development. It may be less important now, and I think it is now generally agreed, that maritime arms control, which was near the top of the agenda, is sliding way down the priority as its aims are being achieved by other means. I think, what it actually forces us to think about more (and I have to admit that I do not think that either Richmond or Corbett have any significant advice on this point to make at all) is the fact that a shortage of resources is increasingly constraining all naval states, more and more. They are being forced increasingly into a situation in which they have to contemplate how to respond collectively to a common set of problems. This does imply a very significant departure from the state-centered way of thinking. It was characteristic of the period before and after the First World War, for example. It is a revolutionary shift, in the extent to which it is happening. The answer to all of the questions that you were asking, in a basic manner, is essentially political and not naval. The extent to which one member of a possible alliance is prepared to say, "I will specialize in this if, in return, you specialize in that," is fundamentally not a naval question. It is a political question, because it has to do with the extent to which one country is prepared to allow another country to have a major share in its security policy formulation. So, on that depends all of the questions you are asking. Once you have actually arrived at how much you can think collectively, then you can apportion who is going to be responsible for minesweeping, how the command and control system is going to work, and all the rest of it.

Rear-Admiral Liardet: *De facto*, we have, in effect, actually been doing that now for some time.

Eric Grove: Just a sort of quick point on that, because it is an arms control question. In a way, it goes back to Ed's point. The people who wanted naval arms control in the past, for obvious reasons, were the Russians. Nowadays, the view of the Russian Foreign Ministry is "The bigger the American navy the better," because the American navy is a factor for stability in the world. You could argue from a theoretical perspective that, as we draw down our navies, we might get the opposite of arms race stability, a sort of a disarmament instability. Therefore, there might be a role for agreements in those circumstances. Of course, the fundamental problem with structural agreement to naval arms control is where Richmond was absolutely right. Different nations have different real interests in the use of the sea. They have different perceptions, certainly, in those interests, and, therefore, it is very difficult for them to accept limitations on their naval forces as a result. This is not to say that in certain parts of the

world where there is an upward trend in naval building that circumstances might be created where some kind of naval arms control or confidence-building measure agreement might still be applicable. I am thinking, particularly, here of South-East Asia with the Thai's building an aircraft carrier, the Chinese getting an aircraft carrier, and there being potential disputes. In these circumstances, perhaps, some kind of naval arms control, or cooperative security agreement, might well have a role to play.

Charles Fairbanks: On that point, as the Admiral Liardet said, it is very important to pay attention to what is happening as we disarm at this point, because history shows that the biggest and the least understood changes in military and naval force posture have occurred during periods of disarmament. For instance, at the end of World War Two, it was the difference in the degree of demobilization between the Western allies and the Russians that established the imbalance in force on the continent of Europe that created the whole post-war political situation.

The point I really want to raise is to come back to the issue of the increase in gun-range after 1900, which seems to me, in a way, the greatest mystery about the pre-World War One navies—that in about 1902, the British Navy understood how to use guns at its preferred fighting range, to decisive effect. By the time the Grand Fleet instructions were written, or even Admiral May's instructions before that, they contemplated fighting at ranges where they did not know how to use their guns to decisive effect. Why did this happen? It's very contra-logical and it seems to me that this is how one can make a certain case for Admiral Richmond on the issue of fighting ranges, that he was reacting to a certain kind of technological absolutism that we have seen since, in strategic air power, for example, by which people extrapolated a purely theoretical capability of technology in or talked about it as though it were a real operational potential. The high water mark of that (it's a real *locus classicus* in military history, which everyone should always have in mind, I think) is the testimony of Captain Fawcett Wray at the court martial of Admiral Trowbridge in which he says, "At a range of 25,000 yards, the *Goeben* then represents an infinite force and a British armored cruiser represents a force of zero because the *Goeben*, at 25,000 yards, can simply destroy a British armored cruiser, without being touched in response." It was that kind of absurdity, I think, that focused Richmond's views in a somewhat opposite kind of extremism.

Andrew Lambert: I want to make two points which have arisen from the papers and the discussion, one for each subject. Firstly, on the subject of Richmond and arms control, I think Richmond went off the rails on this subject. Despite his seeming mastery of the history of the age of sail, he didn't understand the fundamental connection between Britain's strategic position and the structure

of her fleet. As Mahan identified it in *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, the entire security of the British Empire depended on the ability to win a naval battle against any opponent in the selective waters of, say, the Channel or the Mediterranean. Therefore, the British battle fleet was designed to win battles in a way that the contemporary French and Spanish fleets were not. As a result, the British built ships that were identifiably different, with specific combat-related functions. At Trafalgar, for example, Nelson had a preponderance of three-deck ships, which Corbett properly identified in *The Campaign of Trafalgar* as being critical to the way Nelson fought the battle. The French had no three-deck ships, although there were some Spanish ships at that time. That was the way in which the British maintained their position, by building a superior battle fleet which could defeat any opponent. Richmond was throwing that all away, quite clearly, when he said, "We don't need to do this." That was wrong, but I think that he was being intellectually dishonest on that point.

Shifting targets altogether, I would like to move to the point raised by Commander McCoy, about new thinking on the future. Going back to Geoff Till's lecture on "Relevance of Julian Corbett," what we need to do here, I think, is have a quick look at what Martin van Creveld said in *The Transformation of War*, which he subtitled *The Most Radical Reinterpretation Since Clausewitz*. I think that is a fascinating subtitle for a book, written without bothering to read Clausewitz. It is quite clear from what van Creveld is trying to argue that armies have made themselves completely irrelevant. He has not considered the maritime dimension at all. The idea that guerilla warfare at sea will ever be an answer to modern, first-class, war-fighting capacity is completely nonsensical. Just because the Israeli armies are having some problems dealing with an *intifada* in the West Bank does not mean that all modern armed forces are irrelevant. I think if van Creveld wants to replace Clausewitz, he should first read him and master him.

On that point, I think we need to stress obviously the heritage of Clausewitz, which is Corbett's introduction into maritime strategic thinking, and go back to Clausewitz himself and look at his response to an order in 1830 to prepare war plans against France. He said, "I can prepare no plans against France under these circumstances, because you have not told me the objective of the war. Until you tell me why we will fight France, I cannot tell you how we will fight France or how it is possible to defeat France." In consequence, if we want to know what navies are going to do in the future, we must know what the political circumstances are going to be. Until those are clear, we cannot make long-range policy decisions of the type which policymakers would like to make at this time. We cannot have a peace dividend, because we do not know what the peace is going to be. We do not know whether it is going to be peace or war, or what sort of opposition there will be. We need, I think, to reconsider the fundamentals and read some of these fundamental texts, using them to stimulate ourselves into

future thinking, so that we are prepared if any new stability comes along. But we cannot make policy decisions now.

W.A.B. Douglas: I was just brought to life by Ed Miller's question, because it's a very interesting one and, I must say, I want to go back and look at it again myself. From our point of view, on our side of the Atlantic, the Commander of the Newfoundland Escort Force in 1941 said, "The British have sold us down the river to the United States, so they can keep the Eastern Atlantic to themselves." Whether that was an opinion in the Admiralty, at the time, I have not been able to confirm, but Murray was a graduate of the IDC and possibly had been imbued with some of Richmond's principles there.

Captain Peter Swartz: In part, to pick up that and Ed Miller's question and the point raised by Geoffrey Till in his paper, where he said that Corbett offers little guidance in the processes of multinational naval cooperation—that struck me, and this is in the form of a comment before a question; the question is, "is that right?" Did neither of these guys address the processes or possibilities or various aspects of multinational naval cooperation? It struck me—and Geoffrey's points about navies are symptoms—that the words you used: "as well as actors, they're examples of something as well." So are we. Historians and others who are interested in naval history are gathered here together, and the nature of the gathering is very interesting. It is largely Anglo-American, the healthy Canadian contingent, and the French contingent, and so on, but it is basically part and parcel of that Anglo-American naval alliance that started, arguably, in the very late 30s, very early 40s, and it has continued for half a century, nonstop til today. These guys, Corbett and Richmond, yes, they were creatures of their time. Part of their time were eras of animosity between the American and the British, the British and the French, or the British and the Germans, but, also, part of their period was World War I, a time of a great maritime coalition. They were historians; they were looking back at eras in which Britain, by some standards a quintessential coalition power, was engaged in coalition warfare and had other members in the coalition. My history is not good enough to tell me whether that meant that the Royal Navy was allied with other navies, but I certainly recall that Britain was allied with other countries. Why was it, if this is so, that Corbett and Richmond did not address this point which has been so important to us, to everybody in this room, for the past fifty years? It is the reason why we are here today.

Geoffrey Till: I think that is a very interesting question, Pete. I think the answer to it is the fact that the focus of both of them was on war, on the conduct of military operations designed to produce victory in war. In that, of course, coalition war is nothing new. As Admiral Liardet said, earlier on, Nato's been

operating collectively in the anti-war mode for some considerable time. It is not new, but it seems to me that the current preoccupation on multinational cooperation in the peacetime environment, where the object of the exercise is not just to deter war but to be able to do things that will preserve stability—that seems to me to be essentially a new game. It is one that, as far as I know, anyway, neither of the people we have been looking at have actually much to say that is significant. If I could bend this comment back to a point that Andrew Lambert made— Because we are in a position of total uncertainty, because we do not know what navies will have to deliver either nationally or collectively, we are not yet in a position to identify what we need to retain, what we can afford to dispense with, what we can afford, so to speak, to subcontract to reliable allies. So, at the moment, we are all in this unhappy position, I think, of arguing that we need to keep everything that we can possibly manage, even if it is at a lower level, so that we can regenerate it, if necessary. To people outside, that looks awfully like old thinking. That is the problem, it seems to me.

Paul Halpern: In response to Edward Miller's question, I remember a quote from Richmond in *The Keyes Papers* (volume 3, pp. 244–246) and find that on 16 February, with the fall of Singapore imminent, Richmond lamented in a letter to Keyes that they had failed to follow Jellicoe's advice and build a "two-ocean navy"—preferred to trust to luck and refused to consider the possibility that when they were engaged in one hemisphere, "gangsters" in the other would take advantage of their difficulty. In regard to the United States, Richmond wrote, "Dimly perhaps, some allowed themselves to hope that if Japan attacked us in the East, the USA would fly to our help." They forgot the doctrine of the first Lord Stanhope: "Our Navy pride themselves on doing their own service without obligation to foreign help."

Richard Harding: The period in which Corbett and Richmond were writing (particularly post-1905) witnessed the demise of a strategy based primarily on the primacy of the navy. The reasons for this have been examined elsewhere, but the conference did not seem to address it. Neither Corbett nor Richmond were crude navalists, but was their recognition of the combined nature of defence policy any more than a nod in the appropriate direction, whilst they concentrated their attentions on matters of more immediate concern to the Royal Navy? The army did not have the quality of intellectual debate within it, but it did have articulate advocates (*e.g.*, Spencer Wilkinson, Lord Roberts) and perceptive officers (Henry Wilson, Charles Callwell), who could put a case based upon the apparent European military situation and present plausible war plans, which the Royal Navy could not do. The difficulties of combined operations, which gave the Royal Navy an important offensive role, seemed to have been learned by

the Royal Navy only as a result of the practical work done during the 1914–18 war (*e.g.*, Admiral Reginald Bacon's plans to land a division on the Belgian coast.)

This apparent neglect of the practicalities of a policy that the historians endorsed is, to me, an interesting minor addition to the general conference consensus that historians, both civil and serving, have difficulty with the micro-politics of the military organizations. These difficulties include expectations of loyalty, relative ability to understand technical issues, manipulation of academic argument, and public perceptions of objectivity.

The fact that neither the conference speakers nor the audience seemed particularly concerned with picking up this issue might indicate that naval historians still have a service rather than a defence focus. An interesting theme for a future conference might be to bring together historians of all services to examine their assumptions about the contributions they are making to strategy and policy.

I was struck by the lack of reference to the development of the U.S. Navy in the period 1900–1939. This reflects the evolving of a surer philosophy and practice of projecting naval power ashore than the Royal Navy ever managed during the period. This might have provided a useful corrective to any assumption that historians or the Royal Navy had an intellectual dominance of maritime thinking.

The role of historians in assisting the navy to formulate policy was extensively debated on the second day. I came away with a much clearer view of the contributions and limitations of historians. However, I think that if there had been more representatives of other social sciences present, we might well have had to justify our claims to contribute more closely. The general intellectual qualities of broadening perspectives and raising standards of enquiry are not unique to historians. For my own purposes, I came away determined to clarify more precisely the contribution that I can make as a historian to a vocational educational programme. I would not wish to be purely the keeper of any collective memory, nor the supplier of evidence to be utilised by social scientists with more clearly identified professional skills. I have more thinking to do about the creative role of historians, and I think it must start with listening further to social scientists whose disciplines have, in some ways, replaced history during this century as the essential background education for the effective vocationally educated individual.

Andrew Gordan: Underlying this excellent conference was the implicit proposition that historical understanding is beneficial and even necessary to sound thinking in the present—*ergo* the timeless importance of men such as Corbett and Richmond. It would be nice if this flattering assumption were true, but I am not sure that this is what Corbett (at least) was on about, or it certainly is not why he was important. His real contribution was to shine reflected light from

relevant (in his judgement) episodes in the past to illuminate the way ahead at a time when a long period of continuity in the use of sea power had come to an end, and the future was unclear. To an extent this is what Mahan had been doing, but he had a hidden agenda; his mission was to supply signposts for the crossroads.

In the early years of this century the nature of the uses and applications of sea power had suddenly changed. The experiences of the decades of *Pax Britannica* had ceased to provide the guidelines of how the Royal Navy should be used. *Pax Britannica* (a convenient shorthand term for the age during which an unchallenged sea power exerted worldwide influence to keep the peace) had rarely had to concern itself with full-blooded great-power confrontation. Now, notwithstanding earlier scares about France and Russia, all was changed: There was a major naval challenge from the newly united Germany, and little in the late-Victorian training of senior officers and statesmen helped them to determine how naval strength should now be applied. Experience of piracy-suppression, brush-fire wars, and gunboat policing, even of the Crimean War, was far from sufficient.

Hence, the sudden imperative to cast back to the applications of naval power in pre-nineteenth century eras (although Mahan both warmed the bell somewhat and, in doing so, primed the pump of naval challenge). Great powers had confronted each other before, and if history had relevant principles to offer the Edwardians, this must be where to look.

The 1950s hold some parallel inasmuch as the generation of military professionals weaned on big fleets and oceanic clashes in two world wars had no frame of reference for coping with the balance of terror between two superpowers. Again the terms of the game had dramatically changed; and, by default, strategical analysis in the early thermonuclear era was ceded to academic theorists of the Dr. Strangelove mould, such as Kahn and Kissinger.

Now again, the marketplace for naval power is all changed. There is no great power confrontation and there is no cold war. Again the professional servicemen find that their years of experience (in their case, of the Cold War) offer few pointers as to what may be expected of sea power in the future (one could allege that this is loss of direction that happens every two generations and select historical facts tendentiously to prove it, but there would be little point in the exercise).

We therefore, once again, find ourselves in a situation similar to that faced by Corbett's generation, with an uncertain future in which "shelf-life" understanding and skills are not much help. That may be the only similarity. It is a mistake to suppose that dreadnought-age historians can necessarily supply us with answers which are perennially apposite. They may be able to do so in some ways, but their prescriptions were for the dreadnought age and the 1920s, and not for the 1990s.

If the not-very-satisfactory term *Pax Americana* can be used as shorthand for the West's stance in the Cold War, its primary purpose was not the regulation of international behaviour—just as *Pax Britannica* was neither intended for, nor easily adaptable to, main-power confrontations. Brushfire wars outside the arena of East-West confrontation often went unchecked for fear of diverting the West's strength from its main security role. *Pax Britannica* and *Pax Americana* (between which the Corbett-Richmond era acted as a sort of interregnum) were functionally different.

However, the era which Corbett skipped over in his historical analyses—that of *Pax Britannica*—(presumably on the dual grounds that its lessons were no longer applicable and that contemporary policymakers understood them anyway) may be assuming a new relevance in the post-Cold War era. The Gulf war allows that this is already the case.

What all this boils down to is that the naval analyst should choose his historical clothing (if he chooses any at all) to match the weather, as Corbett and Richmond did, and that the utility of history to the military is greatest at junctures of radical change in the strategic climate.

Roger Knight: The main plank of Eric Grove's thesis is that Richmond was indifferent to technology and that this was largely due to the fact that the admiral's real knowledge lay in the eighteenth century and the age of sail. Yet, Grove himself allows no element of technology in this earlier period. For instance, the mobilization of an eighteenth-century fleet was a major political, administrative, and technological effort, which took relatively more of the state's effort and resources than in what Grove calls "the machine age." Whether or not Richmond allowed for these factors, we in the 1990s, with the work of scholars available since Richmond's death, should not make the same mistake; otherwise we shall miss the greater view to which both Corbett and Richmond were pointing. There is more continuity in history than Eric Grove allows; if Richmond misread contemporary and future affairs—and he did—there were other reasons for it.

Eric Grove: My paper on Richmond has been criticized on two related grounds. First, it implies that Richmond was out of touch with contemporary naval affairs, and secondly, that his contacts with Pollen mean that he must have based his small ship theories on sound technical advice. As to the first, I must emphasize that nowhere did I mean to imply that Richmond was out of *touch* with contemporary naval thought, only that he was out of *sympathy* with it. Richmond had every opportunity to know in detail the way the Admiralty was thinking, but his dogmatism made it impossible for him to contribute to the debates in ways that policymakers found useful. Any sign he found of Admiralty

thinking corresponding with his only deepened his frustration that his entire package of ideas was not being adopted.

As to the influence of Pollen, I must admit to being perplexed as to how contacts with the fire-control pioneer could justify Richmond's small-ship eccentricities. Even if the resentful Pollen confirmed to Richmond the failures of fire control in the war, the latter (especially if he really was fully informed of contemporary developments) should have known that new fire-control instruments that really worked were under development in the 1920s. Moreover, no amount of computerized gadgetry could allow a Richmond-type ship to engage an old "mastodon" capital ship with much prospect of success. Its medium guns just would not be able to penetrate the battleship's armor, especially at the extended ranges made possible by modern fire-control. Lighter guns were also inherently less accurate at long ranges. Pollen's dissatisfaction seems just to have fuelled Richmond's mistaken conviction that effective long-range fire was impossible.

As the latest editor of Corbett's *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, I must reluctantly take issue with Don Schurman's assessment of Corbett as more a historian than a maritime strategist. Indeed, I would argue that what makes Corbett such an important naval writer is his ability to distill from the past the "normal," from which other factors—notably technology—might draw us, but to which there is a tendency to return. In his after-dinner speech, Guy Liardet characteristically questioned the value of both history and classical maritime strategic writing because of decisive technological changes, notably in the range of modern sensors. What is striking, however, is how far technical developments subsequent to Admiral Liardet's being in the front line—notably the closing of the passive sonar window in the late 1980s—have returned things closer to the pre-towed array "normal."

As Professor Till pointed out, Corbett's is a much surer intellectual foundation than Mahan's for the formulation of modern strategic concepts for the present and the future. In his emphasis on the use of navies to build alliances, Corbett was pointing towards one of their major contemporary functions. More importantly still, Corbett's emphasis on *maritime* strategy rather than "sea power" makes his thinking very apposite in the era of . . . *From the Sea* and other contemporary formulations of naval doctrine. Corbett always insisted that, because men lived ashore, navies could be truly significant only when they directly affected what happened on land. Indeed, he asserted that it was the main function of navies to enable armies to operate effectively rather than be decisive in themselves. Corbett, thus, emerges as the prophet of the joint power-projection operations that lie at the heart of 1990s naval thinking. Corbett is no mere dusty historian; he is *the* classical maritime strategist with a relevance both today and tomorrow.

Robert S. Jordan: Possibly, one of Sir Julian Corbett's contributions to contemporary thinking about maritime warfare was his discussion of sea control and limited war. The military policy and strategy of the United States during the Cold War was focused on the Soviet "superpower" rivalry, and on the model of unequivocal victory of World War II. As a consequence, the United States, during this period, had difficulty in adjusting its military policy and strategy to other, perhaps more "political" forms of war. In naval terms, this preoccupation with building and deploying naval forces in order to achieve a decisive victory at sea over the enemy fleet, along the lines perhaps of the Battle of Midway, kept alive the Mahanian notion of the decisive engagement. The so-called Maritime Strategy of the 1980s was reflective of this notion, built around the carrier battle group, to be used as both a risk fleet and as an attack fleet.

With the Cold War at an end, sea control and limited war concepts, although slow in coming, are now being forced upon the United States military establishment. A good example in this respect is the September 1992 "White Paper" of the Navy (including the Marine Corps) titled . . . *From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century*, U.S. Department of the Navy, September 1992. As it states, "Our ability to command the seas in areas where we anticipate future operations allows us to re-size our naval forces and to concentrate more on capabilities required in the complex operating environment of the 'littoral' or coastlines of the earth."

Among the many points made, addressing specific aspects of this policy and strategy, the statement which comes closest to reflecting a shift away from Mahanian to Corbettian notions of sea warfare is the following:

This strategic direction, derived from the national Security Strategy, represents a fundamental shift away from open-ocean warfighting on the sea toward joint operations conducted from the sea. The Navy and Marine Corps will now respond to crises and can provide the initial, "enabling" capability for joint operations in conflict—as well as continuing participation in any sustained effort. We will be part of a "sea-air-land" team sustained to respond immediately to the Unified Commanders as they execute national policy.

Richmond's Australian Connection

C.D. Coulthard-Clark

When Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond first went to sea as a young midshipman in 1887, he did so in HMS *Nelson*,¹ the iron-armored frigate which served as the flagship of the commander-in-chief on the Australia Station from 1882 to 1888. It was another four decades before Richmond followed up his firsthand experience of Australian conditions in any substantive form by addressing the strategic issues associated with Australian defence. During the years 1929–36, however, he became a contentious figure in the debate in that country.

The stimulus for Richmond's entry into this field arose from his appointment in 1926 to found the Imperial Defence College (IDC). From the outset it was proposed that the one-year course would include two students from each British dominion.² These arrangements ensured that by the time Richmond's term as commandant ended in 1928, a small number of Australians had passed through the college who were to bear the imprint of his ideas on naval strategy and imperial defence, though in vastly different ways.

On the first IDC course held in 1927 were Commander C.J. Pope of the Royal Australian Navy and Wing Commander S.J. Goble of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). Both these officers subsequently reached senior rank,³ but neither showed the intellectual strengths which might have marked them out as leading thinkers in their different services. In both cases, however, their IDC training was to give them a passing role in later events.

The Australians on the second IDC course in 1928 were Mr. F.G. Shedden, a civilian officer of the Department of Defence and Lieutenant-Colonel J.D. Lavarack of the army. Shedden's expertise was in accountancy, and during his time at the IDC he gave lectures on financial administration. Following the course he carried out research at the London School of Economics as well as visiting the Committee

¹ *Dictionary of National Biography 1941–1950*, Oxford University Press, London, 1959, p. 723.

² T.I.G. Gray, *The Imperial Defence College and the Royal College of Defence Studies 1927–1977*, HMSO, Edinburgh, 1977, p. 3.

³ Pope was promoted to rear admiral on his retirement as a captain. He was re-employed as a commander during World War II. Goble went on to become an Air Vice Marshal.

of Imperial Defence (CID) where he met and began a long association with the secretary to that body, Sir Maurice Hankey, before returning to become secretary of the Defence Committee in Australia. In 1937 he became the permanent head of the Defence Department, a post he held until 1956. As one historian has noted, the influence of Sir Frederick Shedden (he was knighted in 1943) on Australian defence matters in the twenty-eight years after his attendance at the IDC was to be “unrivalled.”⁴

Lavarack's profile in Australian defence circles was also highly significant. Director of Training at Army Headquarters (AHQ) in Melbourne, before going to the IDC, he subsequently returned to AHQ to become Director of Military Operations and Intelligence (DMO&I)—one of the most important posts which made him the confidential adviser to the Chief of the General Staff (CGS). Appointed commandant of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1933, he became CGS for four years from 1935. During the Second World War he was a corps and army commander, attained the rank of lieutenant-general, and was knighted in 1941. Sir John Lavarack was governor of the state of Queensland from 1946 to 1957.

For Shedden, the year spent at the IDC had an immediate and profound impact on his outlook on strategic defence issues. He adopted Richmond's ideal of imperial defence based on sea power, a concept focussed on developing and utilizing the resources of the Empire for collective security purposes, and—as he told the admiral the year after his attendance—he found “it hard to restrain myself from switching from dull public finance to the more intriguing naval subject.”⁵ Shedden maintained a lasting friendship with Richmond, corresponding regularly until the latter's death in 1946, and in later years described him as “the greatest modern writer on Imperial strategy and history.”⁶

Perhaps understandably with such a thorough convert, Richmond reported that Shedden had a “clear brain,” adding that “the assistance he has given me personally in the study of Australian conditions has been—I do not exaggerate—inestimable.”⁷ Possibly this referred to Richmond's preparation of an article called “Some Questions Concerning Australian Defence,” published in the 1929 *Naval Review*.⁸ For his

⁴ D.M. Horner, *High Command: Australia & Allied Strategy 1939–1945* (Sydney: Australian War Memorial with George Allen & Unwin, 1982), pp. 6–7.

⁵ Shedden to Richmond, 6 June 1929, Richmond papers, National Maritime Museum (hereafter NMM), London; I am indebted to Commander J.V.P. Goldrick for this reference.

⁶ Shedden almost certainly wrote the speech to Parliament on 4 June 1947 by the Minister for Defence, J.J. Dedman, which set forth post-war defence policy. This cited Richmond's *Statesmen and Sea Power* in reaffirming the fundamental importance of sea power to Australia. See *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 192, p. 3338.

⁷ Horner, pp. 6–7.

⁸ Richmond was by no means solely reliant on Shedden for his information on Australian defence, since other correspondents were also keeping him abreast of developments there. Among these was Rear-Admiral W.R. Napier, the Royal Navy officer serving as Australia's chief of the Naval Staff, who wrote to Richmond on 31 October 1928; Richmond papers, NMM. This letter is erroneously attributed to an Australian Defence Department official named Frazier (a misreading of the signature) in B.N. Primrose, “Australian

part, Shedden told Richmond that his object was to arouse the interest of the Australian Minister for Defence “by a good presentation of the case of Imperial and Australian defence, which will result in an examination by a body such as yourself and an army and air officer. . . .”⁹

Richmond’s effect on Lavarack was considerably less. The latter did not embrace the Admiral’s outlook as fully as Shedden, although this does not appear to have given rise to any particular animus between commandant and student. Richmond reported that Lavarack was “an excellent colleague . . . [who] has taken every opportunity to profit from the course.”¹⁰ Nonetheless, as soon as Lavarack was back in Melbourne he began producing papers which drew attention to the inadequacies of imperial defence arrangements as these applied to Australia. The focus of concern was planning associated with the development of the naval base at Singapore as the linchpin for defending British interests in the Far East.

Lavarack was by no means a lone voice, nor was he even a prime mover in the dissenting movement over what had become the policy of successive Australian governments since 1923. Senior army officers had long been questioning the emphasis given to navy among the three Australian services, especially when it came to budgetary allocations. In 1927, for example, Lieutenant-Colonel (later Lieutenant-General) H.D. Wynter—himself later a student at the IDC in 1930—published an article stating that imperial defence was concerned with the defence of Britain, not Australia, and argued for self-reliance. He concluded that “Australia should provide in her own territory, within the area which is defensible by her local land and air forces, a first class naval base capable of undertaking the maintenance of the British Battle Fleet.”¹¹

In March 1930 the CGS, Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Chauvel, “went to the extreme” of asking in the Defence Committee whether Australia could really afford the RAN; this service was, he argued, then costing over half the defence vote and compromised the efficiency of local defence by reducing the resources available to the Army and the RAAF.¹² Such proposals were naturally opposed by the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), Rear-Admiral Munro-Kerr (a Royal Navy officer), who replied to Chauvel’s argument for Australian defence funds being put to local defence purposes that “Invasion on a large scale by Japan was so remote that in the present financial condition of the country it should not be

Naval Policy, 1919 to 1942: A Case Study in Empire Relations,” (Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1974), p. 168n.

⁹ Shedden to Richmond, 25 February and 30 December 1929, Richmond papers, NMM. In the second letter Shedden told the admiral that his verbal suggestions “for a joint commission of experts from abroad were not received with enthusiasm.” Again, I am indebted to James Goldrick for these references.

¹⁰ A.B. Lodge, “Lieutenant-General Sir John Lavarack as military commander,” (Ph.D. thesis, University of New South Wales, 1987), p. 19.

¹¹ Horner, p. 8.

¹² A.J. Hill, *Chauvel of the Light Horse* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1978), p. 217.

considered." Instead, a subcommittee was appointed to review a 1928 appreciation on the contingency of war in the Pacific. This body, comprising Colonel Lavarack for the army, Group Captain Goble for the RAAF, and Captain Pope for the RAN, failed to reach agreement. Lavarack and Goble considered that an invasion of Australia was possible with the reduction in British sea power that had occurred, while Pope echoed the view stated by CNS. The outcome was that the allocation of funds proceeded on a basis *pro rata* to the 1929–30 vote.¹³

In refining their arguments, army critics of Australia's defence priorities increasingly challenged faith in Britain's naval strength. Did the Royal Navy have the ship numbers to adequately defend the Empire, especially after the reductions brought about by the agreement made at the Washington Conference of 1921–22? What value to Australia was a bare naval base at Singapore if the Suez Canal was blocked, thereby delaying passage of the promised fleet? Even more fundamental was the concern that, if an emerging threat in the Far East coincided with a war in Europe, priority would be given to defending the British Isles. In such circumstances the question was not merely whether a British fleet would reach Singapore in time, but whether such a force would be sent at all. As Lavarack wrote in an appreciation in March 1930, the probability was that Japan would "make war only when she is reasonably certain of comparatively minor opposition at sea for a time long enough to enable her to establish command in the Western Pacific." Surely, he argued, in such circumstances it behoved Australia to retain mobile land forces to frustrate, and if necessary confront, an adversary appearing off Australian shores.

Into this scene, Shedden returned to Melbourne and in 1930 began injecting his ideas formed at the IDC under Richmond. Before leaving England, he had written a paper of over one hundred pages entitled "An Outline of the Principles of Imperial Defence with Special References to Australian Defence," which stressed the importance of the Royal Navy. A copy of this document had been sent by the author to Richmond for comment, and was duly returned with warm praise for its sympathetic treatment of "the true and economical doctrine of Imperial Defence." The ideas expressed, the admiral said, were exactly the ones he had been advancing in his teachings at the college, and he even went so far as to say that when he completed his own writings on this subject he feared he would be regarded as a plagiarist by those who had read Shedden's views. The paper, circulated within the Department of Defence, duly came to the attention of the Labor prime minister, J.H. Scullin.¹⁴

The task of responding to Shedden's analysis from the army's point of view fell to Lavarack in his post as DMO&I. Preparing a nine-page memorandum, he complimented Shedden on "a brilliant and thoughtful contribution to the

¹³ Horner, pp. 8–9.

¹⁴ Lodge, pp. 27–29; Horner, p. 7. Both cite material in the Shedden papers (MP 1217) now held by Australian Archives, CRS A5954, especially boxes 38, 39 and 46.

general question of Empire Defence” but then proceeded to demolish its substance. Arguing that the paper concentrated on ideal solutions in ideal circumstances, Lavarack charged that Shedden’s opinions were based on “unsound premises regarding the strength and probable method of employment of the British Navy.”¹⁵

Telling Richmond that his paper was “being vigorously argued about,” Shedden wrote to ask for the admiral’s “brief impressions” on the replies he intended to make to his critics; Richmond duly obliged.¹⁶ To claims that the British government might refuse to permit a fleet to sail for the Far East, Richmond responded that he had “never heard of a more stupid statement” and claimed that there was not the slightest doubt that ships would be sent if strategy required it. References to the possibility of a war in the Far East coinciding with conflict in Europe were similarly dismissed as “one of those almost incredibly foolish things [,] . . . a hypothetical situation of a highly improbable nature.” Advising Shedden to hold his ground, Richmond urged “*Don’t* let these Humbugs get away with it.” As Lavarack’s biographer has observed, these rejoinders may have boosted Shedden’s morale but in reality did nothing to undermine Lavarack’s arguments.¹⁷

Richmond’s sharp rebuttal of the views of army critics was seriously undermined at this juncture by the appearance in print of contrary opinions from a naval source seemingly as well-placed and authoritative as himself. In an article in the *Royal United Services Institution Journal* in 1930, Admiral Sir Richard Webb, a former President of the Naval War College, declared:

We are not only an Oceanic Power in the widest sense, but also a European country with all Europe’s complicated troubles and responsibilities at our door; that being so, to imagine we are going to uncover the heart of the Empire and send our fleet thousands of miles into the Pacific with only one base, Singapore, for our supplies and damaged ships, is to write us down as worse than fools. Anyway the British public would never tolerate it.¹⁸

Richmond, however, did not confine his interventions in the Australia defence debate to purely private support. In July 1932, an article by him, “An Outline of Imperial Defence,” appeared in the *Army Quarterly* of London. In this piece, the admiral criticised dominion advocates of policies which aimed “to confine the fighting forces to formations whose object is purely local defence against invasion by means of submarines and aircraft; and to military forces upon

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ NMM, Richmond Papers: Shedden to Richmond, 24 April 1930; Richmond to Shedden, 21 May 1930. CRS A5954, box 39.

¹⁷ Lodge, pp. 37–38.

¹⁸ I. Hamill, *The Strategic Illusion: The Singapore Strategy and the Defence of Australia and New Zealand, 1919–1942* (Singapore University Press, 1981), p. 235.

a national service basis whose liability for service does not extend outside the territory of the Dominion."¹⁹

Lavarack did not let such remarks pass unanswered. His reply, entitled "The Defence of the British Empire with Special Reference to the Far East and Australia," published in the same journal in January 1933, accused Richmond of being content to talk about ideal defence "unconditioned by world agreements, Dominion policies, finance, disarmament and pacificism." He repeated questions regarding the Royal Navy's ability to provide defence when needed, pointing out that Britain's unchallengeable supremacy at sea had disappeared. Australia therefore needed to offset these changed circumstances by building up land-based forces—as well as co-operating in naval defence—to prevent an enemy obtaining a base on the Australian mainland which would be necessary to mount an effective naval blockade of the entire Australian coastline. The larger and more effective army and air force, he argued, the less chance there was of a crippling blockade; and it made sense to build up these services since they, unlike the navy, were unfettered by restrictions such as those imposed by the Washington agreement which limited construction of capital ships. In conclusion Lavarack wrote:

. . . security based on the control of sea communications alone is a counsel of perfection which, for practical reasons, is not, and cannot be, of absolute application. Control sufficient to ensure the maintenance of essential trade routes will, however, still be possible, and this, supplemented by the deterrent effect, and actual opposition, of Dominion land and air forces, must furnish the basis on which the Imperial Defence of today must be founded.²⁰

Richmond duly hit back with a reply on "Imperial Defence," published in the October 1933 issue, which criticised Lavarack for labouring under the doctrine of national sufficiency. As the admiral's biographer had pointed out, he was very much out of step with the atmosphere of "Commonwealth" which was evolving after the First World War: "Like most of his British contemporaries, Richmond was not altogether sensitive to the forces of developing Dominion nationalism (what he derisively called "State Patriotism") and the changing nature of the whole Empire connection."²¹ In a three-part paper, which he had prepared as part of his Commandant's Lecture series at the IDC, Richmond made the assumption that "the Empire is in fact an Alliance for the defence of the interests of all its members"; when his draft was passed to Hankey

¹⁹ G. Long, *To Benghazi* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1952), p. 17.

²⁰ Lodge, pp. 52–53; see also the chapter by Lodge on Lavarack in D.M. Horner (ed.), *The Commanders: Australian military leadership in the twentieth century*, 2nd edition (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992), pp. 129–30.

²¹ B.D. Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, 1871–1946* (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1982), p. 135.

for comment by CID staff, it drew the pointed reminder that "Possibly two out of the four Dominions would admit the truth of that, though there were days when Australia did not admit it. Neither Canada nor South Africa would admit it."²² This defect in Richmond's perspective was evident in much of the attitude he adopted towards Australian critics of his own ideas on imperial defence.

Concern about the defence debate taking place in Australia, with its heavy overtones of an interservice struggle between the army and navy, led to the visit in late 1934 of Hankey himself. Before Hankey departed Britain, Shedden sent him a copy of his IDC paper on the principles of imperial defence, which must have satisfied him that there were at least some "people with basically 'sound' views engaged in the administration of defence policy in Australia."²³

The report which Hankey produced as a result of his time in Australia duly became the new target of the army's critics of imperial defence. Lavarack argued that Hankey's advice, "whilst receiving the respect and attention due to his high authority, should not be allowed to obscure consideration of the detail of what is a purely Australian problem."²⁴ Lavarack's superior at CGS, Major-General J.H. Bruche, agreed that Hankey's words only reflected "the viewpoint which we are accustomed to receive from the authorities in Whitehall. To these authorities the defence of Australia is but an incident in a world-wide problem".²⁵

Although supplanted by Hankey as the standard-bearer leading the British charge against the "invasionist" school within the Australian Army, Richmond still sallied forth on occasion. In 1935 a pamphlet called *Japan and the Defence of Australia* was published in Melbourne by "Albatross." This was the pseudonym for a retired army major, E.L. Piesse, who had been director of military intelligence at AHQ from 1916 to 1919 and was now a public commentator on defence issues. Directed at "Professors who believe in collective security in the Pacific" and at "Admirals who believe in Imperial Defence for Australia," the thesis of Piesse's publication hewed a line remarkably close to the views previously expressed by Lavarack, Wynter, and others concerning the degree of reliance to be placed on the Royal Navy in the event of a Japanese threat to Australia.

The decline of British sea power and the danger of war in Europe meant, in Piesse's view, that it was improbable that British naval aid would be available to Australia either immediately or eventually. Australia therefore had to rely "solely and finally on our own resources and preparations," with little prospect of British aid or of the United States interesting itself in any quarrel Japan might have with Australia. He warned against putting trust in navies for salvation, urging instead

²² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

²³ Hamill, p. 252.

²⁴ Lodge in *The Commanders*, p. 131

²⁵ Horner, *High Command*, p. 11.

reliance on land forces and aircraft, supplemented by small naval craft such as submarines and destroyers. As one historian has noted, the case argued by Piesse and "others of the same school" were inclined to view the question of Australian defence in too narrow a context, one which ignored the value of participating with allies in the broader struggle which even they supposed would be raging when Japan made her anticipated attack; "It may be hard to sustain a case that the discussion of defence was isolationist, but it would be very much harder to disprove the charge that it was extremely provincial."²⁶

Inevitably the suspicion arose in Australian political circles that Piesse was acting as the mouthpiece of the General Staff. Lavarack strongly denied such suggestions, declaring: "We have not undertaken a campaign of counter-propaganda and have not even stated our own case, because we pride ourselves on our tradition of loyalty to the Government and silence." Nonetheless, most historians agree that encouragement, if not actual collusion, had occurred. Certainly Lavarack was himself corresponding with Piesse on general defence questions in 1935,²⁷ and in this case appears to have allowed Colonel Wynter, as his Director of Military Training, to read and comment on proofs of the book.²⁸

The fact that Piesse's offering appeared to be another round in the army's campaign to press its case prompted Richmond to respond with a review under the title "Australia's Defences," published in the February 1936 issue of the *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*. Specifically, the admiral took issue with Piesse's questioning of the possibility of an enemy mounting a completely effective blockade on the entire Australian continent. This was a subject on which he had previously made his own pronouncements, arguing that closure of a dominion's "limited number of great ports . . . would be a national disaster." In Australia's case he had pointed out that, although there were seven major ports, two-thirds of all shipping passed through Sydney, Newcastle, and Melbourne:

Very little imagination is needed to appreciate the effect which would be produced in that island continent by a blockade of those three ports alone, all the remainder of the coast remaining open and free to commerce. . . . The shutting out of the two-thirds of the tonnage would spell ruin in every part of the country. The people could feed themselves and no more.²⁹

In response to Piesse's claims, he repeated his argument that the severance of overseas trade, which was bound to follow from the loss of naval supremacy,

²⁶ P.M.C. Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1952), p. 46.

²⁷ J.M. McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918-39: A Study in Air and Sea Power* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1976), p. 40.

²⁸ Horner, *High Command*, p. 12.

²⁹ H.W. Richmond, *Imperial Defence and Capture at Sea in War* (London: Hutchison, 1932), pp. 75-76.

would inevitably result in the collapse of Australia, if only because of the internal disruption it would cause.³⁰

For his part, Lavarack later maintained that, while he criticised Australian reliance on British sea power, he was never actually opposed to the principle of imperial defence. In a letter to Richmond in March 1936 he wrote:

All that I do is to query the freedom of action, in all circumstances, of the Royal Navy. I consider that those who believe that the 'period before relief' in the Far East will be only a few weeks are dangerous optimists, and that Australia may have to be prepared to hold her own territories and protect her own local interests for many months, or even a few years . . . I am a firm believer in Naval defence for the Empire, but I believe that the standard of Naval power is too low for safety. . . .

I have never opposed Australia's Naval contribution, though I have opposed its extension towards the point at which it would entail the annihilation of the other Services.³¹

In view of the concerted stand taken by Richmond over the years in the face of his Australian Army critics, it is rather surprising to discover that at other times and in other circles he effectively acknowledged the validity of many of their concerns. In *Statesmen and Sea Power*, usually regarded as his greatest book, Richmond candidly accepted that the Washington Conference had failed to "provide the two-hemisphere British Empire with the two-hemisphere navy of its needs." The margin of superiority allowed by the 1922 agreement over Japan, in particular, "would exist only if the entire British fleet could be sent to the Far East, without leaving any force in the European seas":

That would be a risk which could only be taken in circumstances of exceptional tranquility in Europe, circumstances which, in practice, could never be expected to exist. In fact, supposing Britain were engaged in a war with even one only of the European States she would have to allow for the possible hostility of Japan: and vice versa.³²

Had not the proponents of local defence in Australia said exactly the same thing and been derided by Richmond?

In the same work, Richmond also acknowledged that before the Second World War:

A feeling of anxiety, not to say alarm, very naturally arose in Australia and New Zealand, who saw that the shield which had hitherto protected them no longer could be counted upon. Writers in Australia pointed out that if Great Britain

³⁰ Hamill, pp. 267–68.

³¹ Lodge in *The Commanders*, p. 133; also quoted in Horner, *High Command*, p. 11.

³² H.W. Richmond, *Statesmen and Sea Power* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 290.

should at some future, and perhaps not distant, time become involved in a European war the entire British fleet would be needed in the European seas and the opportunity would then be offered to Japan to seize the territories in the South Seas on which her eyes had long been cast [at which point he cited Piesse's 1935 publication in a footnote!].

But, by no means conceding that he could have been wrong in his pre-war analysis and judgements, he went on:

Unfortunately the true solution of the problem of defence was not recognized either in the Dominions or in Britain, namely, the re-establishment by a joint effort of the Empire's sea power on a two-hemisphere basis. In the Dominions proposals were made to provide security by measures of local defence—of land forces, submarines, mines, and aircraft—measures which, in the disproportion of the strengths of the seven millions of Australia and the seventy or more of Japan were, and should have been known to be, completely useless.³³

Tucked away in an appendix dealing with "Defence of Colonies and Trade," Richmond revealed the extent of his own blinkered vision on this crucial question of whether dominions would have been wrong to place even greater emphasis on local instead of imperial defence. It was, he admitted, the absence of a British naval "mass" stationed in the "area of departure" so as to complicate an adversary's invasion plans which in 1941–42 had enabled Japanese armies "to move unmolested and in force across the sea to the many British and Dutch islands and possessions in the Pacific":

Even though local garrisons existed, their powers of resistance were limited to holding out until relief should arrive, and the force needed to provide it did not exist, the entire mass of the navy being locked up in the European theatre. Aid came to Australia, but only just in time, in the shape of the American navy. The economies which limited the [Royal] navy to a single hemisphere for the defence of a two-hemisphere empire proved costly. . . .³⁴

Fully foreseen as these were, only the most committed imperialist could have argued that Australians, who considered local defence needs should have primacy in such circumstances, had been entirely misguided or wrong-headed.

By far the most disconcerting aspect to Richmond's outlook on the question of imperial versus local defence priorities was his own reservations about the worth and efficacy of arrangements focussed upon the Singapore base. As early as 1924, during his time as commander-in-chief of the East Indies Station, he had himself voiced doubts about the naval staff's whole Far Eastern strategy. It concerned him then that the Admiralty appeared to be unclear in its own mind

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 342–43.

as to how it intended to prosecute a war against Japan. While planning called for the despatch of most of Britain's capital ships to Singapore if the need arose, little preparation or thought had gone into what the fleet would do once it had arrived in the Far East.

Richmond reportedly accepted that Singapore was an essential element in the defence of Indian and Australian territory and trade, but doubted if it offered a "means of developing offence." He personally favoured the idea of focussing on retention of Hong Kong as an advanced base from which an offensive could be launched, a view which he managed to see adopted at a conference of British naval commanders held at Singapore in 1925. On surrendering his East Indies command at the end of that year, he had also shown concern over the adequacy of the defences of Singapore by offering a suggestion for the establishment of an imperial military reserve for the Far East. He was, we are told, justifiably worried by the lack of coordination among the three services in the region, in particular the tendency by the Admiralty to view Singapore, in all its aspects, as primarily a naval matter and to show complete disregard for the other two services in drawing up its plans. Finally, it seems that he was convinced *even then* that Britain lacked the naval strength to fight wars simultaneously in both the Far East and Europe, suggesting that it was "better frankly to acknowledge [Britain's] inability, than to continue to live in a fool's paradise," and urging the use of diplomacy to keep either Japan or Europe out of any war.³⁵

We can only query what it was that persuaded Richmond to regard Australian concerns about the Singapore strategy (essentially the same as those he himself expressed just a few years earlier) as completely wild and invalid? Was it a realization that public exposure of the fallacy which Singapore represented, as opposed to debate within service channels, carried the grave risk of exposing the full extent of British military weakness? Or was it the fact that such doubts, with their implied criticism of Admiralty competence, came from mere colonials?

Whatever the answer to these questions, in his contribution to the Australian defence debate in the early 1930s there emerges good grounds in support of the view of Richmond suggested by Eric Grove's paper to this conference. At times, his attitude to vital issues concerning imperial defence cooperation was reactionary, lacking in perspective, partisan, and apparently disingenuous. Perhaps the airman on the IDC staff during Richmond's time who criticised the depths of the Admiral's scholarship, claiming that seemingly "he could only treat history objectively so long as its lessons did not interfere with his preconceived ideas,"³⁶ had a point. As Grove argues, this is not at all what might have been expected from a "sailor-scholar" such as he.

³⁵ Hamill, pp. 124, 128-30.

³⁶ Hunt, p. 160.

Corbett and Richmond in France¹

Hervé Coutau-Bégarie

Corbett's foreign reputation did not begin to develop until after the First World War,² resulting from his work at the Admiralty. In 1924, the Imperial Japanese Navy distributed an abbreviated translation, and in 1936 a Spanish translation was made by the Argentine Naval War College. Just as World War II began in 1939, Vice Admiral von Reuter published his German translation with the expressive title, *Die Seekriegsführung Großbritanniens*. Then, in 1958, a Chinese translation was published in Taiwan.

In France, the publication of *Some Principles* was late and limited. The first full translation did not appear before 1993, but the book had been noticed long before; first, unofficially, in the *Revue Maritime* for 1913 and then in an official report in 1918.

Some Principles appeared about the same time as Mahan's *Naval Strategy* and there was, naturally, a strong temptation to compare the two works. The German admiral, Curt von Maltzahn, did a notable job of this in an article that first appeared in *Marine Rundschau*³ in 1912, and then, translated into French and published in *Revue Maritime* the following year under the title "Naval Strategy in its connections with military strategy."⁴ Maltzahn had read the works of two authors and compared them to the inevitable master of German strategic thought, Clausewitz. From an epistemological point of view, Corbett appeared, to Maltzahn, to be obviously better than Mahan:

Clausewitz created a work of understanding for land warfare to which Mahan does not subscribe. . . . Corbett—and others before him—have tried, not without success, to do it for naval warfare, and have, thus, gone far from Mahan with his historical method.

¹ This essay is translated from the French and adapted by John B. Hattendorf from the section "Corbett et Castex" which appears as part of Hervé Coutau-Bégarie's introductory essay to the translation of Corbett's *Some Principles: Principes de Strategie Maritime* (Paris: Economica et FEDN, 1993). The original version of the section printed here appears on pp. 16–24.

² See Appendix A to this volume, pp. 298–299.

³ Friherr von Maltzahn, "Seestrategie in ihren Beziehungen zur Landstrategie nach english-amerikanischem Urteil," *Marine Rundschau* 23, July 1912, pp. 869–86.

⁴ Maltzahn, "La strategie navale dans ses rapports avec la strategie militaire," *Revue Maritime*, volume 196, janvier-mars 1913, pp. 109–18 and continued in volume 197, avril-juin 1913, pp. 94–101.

But the distance between Corbett and official doctrine worried him, and the German commentator revealed uneasiness in his conclusion:

Following English critics, I have expressed doubts about many things Corbett says in his book and, in contrast, I cling to Mahan's strategic principles. But, when I study the two volumes in question by the standards I developed in my introduction, I reach an inverse opinion. Corbett's establishment of strategic doctrine is much clearer and tighter. His method proceeds from a logical development and, in contrast, falls back on examples which appear more judicious to me. Moreover, the historical basis—the history of naval warfare—is nowhere lost.

Thus, on one hand, there is acknowledgement of Corbett's superior intellect, and on the other, a devastating criticism. The single Frenchman who reviewed *Some Principles* had an analogous reaction. This unsigned review in *Revue Maritime*⁵ appeared at the end of 1913. It is a long, very neutral analysis of the different chapters of the work. The reviewer begins by declaring, "Mr. Corbett's specifically English character leads him to modify greatly the strategic principles set forth by Clausewitz and his school."

In the conclusion, he finally produces his critical assessment:

Ones sees that the author deviates from important points in the doctrine that currently prevails on the concentration of means and efforts, on the pursuit of an enemy's heavy naval forces and on decisive battle for command of the sea dominating all strategy. Consequently, his work has received much criticism, even in England, and a well known naval writer, Mr. Wilkinson,⁶ has written in the Morning Post that this book will come to have a very harmful effect on young officers. It is certain that there would be some danger to make it a manual of strategy and to take some of Mr. Corbett's principles as fundamental principles of naval strategy. But if one sees it, above all, as a work of criticism, destined to cause reflection on the abuse of extending true principles too far, by not using them only in a general fashion and according them too absolute a value, the study of this work will only be profitable in opening the eyes of the reader and displaying before him the complexity of historical examples that stand in the way of the simplistic rigidity of certain theoretical principles.⁷

The first official echo of its appearance in French eyes is in a report to the Naval Ministry in Paris from the French liaison officer serving with the Grand Fleet in 1918. In his report, dated in the battle cruiser HMS *Renown* on 26 April 1918, capitaine de frégate Pierre Vandier wrote:

⁵ *Revue Maritime*, volume 199, novembre-décembre 1913, pp. 272–77.

⁶ Today, Spencer Wilkinson, Chichele Professor of Military History, Oxford University 1909–23, is better remembered as a military writer, but in an earlier career as a journalist, he had written *The Brain of a Navy* (1894) and *Command of the Sea* (1895). Influential admirals such as Lord Charles Beresford, Sir Geoffrey Phipps Hornby, Philip Colomb, and Edmund Freemantle encouraged his work. On Wilkinson, see Jay Luvaas, *The Education of an Army* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), chapter 8, and Hattendorf, "The Study of War History at Oxford," in Hattendorf and Murfett, eds., *The Limitations of Military Power* (London: Macmillan, 1990), chapter 1.

⁷ *Revue Maritime*, volume 199, novembre-décembre 1913, p. 277.

. . . It is rather simple to understand English strategy and, even if the secret of operations are kept well guarded, the general ideas the Admiralty follows are evident. To come in contact with them, I asked about books on naval history which are worth reading. The response is invariable: read Corbett and, they add, moreover, the Admiralty provides the ships a library where one finds the principal works of maritime history. Since my arrival here, I have read Corbett and I declare that his works are all of great interest, certainly superior to all that has been written in France on this subject.

Above all, Corbett attempts to explain the success England achieved in its wars and the immense world power she acquired from them, by using the methods and theories of the masters of continental strategy as far as they are useful. They provide, he says, an analysis of wars which reached the point of being useful for land warfare, but if one pushes a little bit further, one finds a more general formula which includes all maritime actions as well. The latter, by the form of their action, are intimately tied to economic conditions and general politics of a more subtle character, much slower in effect, but more dangerous than the power of armies.

A profound study of the differences between battles on land and at sea, as well as of the laws of amphibious warfare, leads Corbett to pose the most solid basis that I know of for all naval reasoning. And this basis is part of the small, but solid, intellectual material the English use for their thought and judgement.

Today, the English find themselves on the sea in the situation they have nearly always been and they do not suffer from the false conception of the role of fleets that we have so vividly felt. They find themselves facing the classic case when enemy fleets remain on the defensive.

They know, above all, that the blockade they have been able to establish has only a very slow effect. They are persuaded, like Mahan, that Napoleon received a mortal blow at Trafalgar, but they do not ignore that Trafalgar was in 1805 and the campaign in France was in 1814.

They know, as well, that the power of the Mistress of sea power can only use that power with extreme reserve, because, in that domain, neutrals have their rights and that excessive control of the sea would swing the rest of the world against England, even more surely than the dreams of continental hegemony bring coalitions against their authors. English restraint and moderate application without bridle, to the contrary, the Germans have made their naval power so explicit that countries outside Europe have felt that it threatened the liberty of the seas. It was not English naval power, although Kaiser Wilhelm said it was, but the German conception of force. They know also that their commerce will never find a sea free of enemies and that the protection of it depends on flotillas in the narrow seas. They know also that, when it becomes necessary, concentration of commerce in convoys, despite economic disadvantages, is the price of better protection. It is true to say that Corbett, for technical reasons expounded on at length in his writings, believed in the possibility of convoy organization, and it is for that reason that the English have for so long been unwilling to accept that idea. However, while making the most of them these technical reasons were not able to modify the force of things, so that during the last year, I obtained from them that they have applied to the coal trade the organizational ideas of Admiral de Bon,⁸ trying to gather from that arrangement the current general application.

They know that from the moment when the functioning convoys depart, they will become a target for the enemy and that the strategic positions the squadrons occupy should be such as to be able to cover several routes. Inevitably, the battles of cruisers or of fleets will take place around the issue of convoys and the battle of Jutland appears to them of that nature.

Corbett has apprised them that in many English wars, it was the military expedition which formed the principal part of it and that, if the French had instructions for attacking

⁸ In response to urgent French requests, the first convoys had been organized in the Channel in order to ship English coal to France.

troop convoys, they were good instructions, despite Mahan's ideas, and revealed that the English Admiralty accepted it, from all appearances, in analogous cases. He shows that there have been many approaches to protecting troop transports and he sees that, very probably, it will be open blockade which would be imposed by modern arms.

In effect, history offers more examples of a blockade as open as that which currently operates in regard to the German fleet. The great danger in open blockade is that, being executed from a friendly home base, a naval force can lose its combative force at anchor. To avoid this, it must incessantly undertake bold, secondary operations.

The great advantage of open blockade is that it tempts the enemy fleet to get underway and that temptation will be all the greater when the blockading force's secondary operations are very bold and give the appearance of leading the blockading force to a partial success. Without doubt, this temptation will produce the necessary effect one day, because a continental power, crushed by the specter of an interminable war, will grasp that England is the worse and the toughest enemy, and will try in a fit of despair, to strike at her heart.

England knows that these temptations have never succeeded, but she also knows that for the desperate they will work, they not being either strongly convinced of that nor extremely dangerous for her. And it is not necessary to believe that, if she appeals to all the good wishes in that great crisis, she ignores the dangers of it.

The bad weather, the delays, the hazards of the sea serve England, as well as the tenacity, maritime sense, the endurance of her seamen, and the simple and wise views of her Admiralty.

Never before has England led a war as she does today. The support she offered her continental allies was very strong in Hanover, in Portugal, in Flanders, but always had the character of a limited effort. For the first time, England enters into an unlimited continental war, that she comprehends what it is to say vanquish or die and because of that it is necessary to change her national life entirely and to find herself confronted, once again, with the eternal Irish problem.⁹

Although the developing situation naturally concentrated forces, England was not least tempted to exploit her naval power through the means of, what is called here, amphibious warfare. From it came the expedition to the Dardanelles, Syria and Mesopotamia, all tied, as in our expedition to Salonika, to the idea of stopping German expansion to the South. One does not know whether these military operations will, if they are legitimate daughters of general politics, represent unquestionable gains, but they clearly conform to traditional English methods. Some people here think that they have made Germany abandon her idea of expansion to the South and that, since the fall of Russia, Germany favors movement to the East, a movement that will carry the name of Pan Touranien.¹⁰ It is the danger of this new orientation that prompted Lloyd George's letter to India.¹¹

Among the other methods of using the sea exposed by Mahan [sic, read Corbett.], there are amphibious operations having the object of facilitating the work of the fleet. Also, the attempts on Zeebrugge¹² and Ostende have been received with extraordinary enthusiasm. As the Admiralty pointed out, the men who took part came from the Grand Fleet and, in the first battle-cruiser squadron, they cite with pride the names of officers, from the Tiger, from the Princess Royal, and from the Repulse, who died in that fine enterprise.

⁹ At Easter 1916, the Sinn Fein began the insurrection in Dublin in which more than 500 died.

¹⁰ I.e., relating to the hypothetical group of languages which includes Turkish and Mongolian.

¹¹ Ghandi's agitations, which began in 1915, led the Prime Minister to permit reforms leading to the promulgation of a constitution for India in 1919.

¹² The bottling up of Zeebrugge, organized by Admiral Keyes, took place on 23 April 1918, only three days before this report was written.

Although that letter touches subjects beyond mine, I believe it necessary to write about it to better explain these operations, humble in appearance with the bold activity of the Grand Fleet, and note how exactly all these operations correspond in English thought.¹³

This mention of Corbett's work attracted the chief of naval staff's attention; he ordered a translation of so influential a work. The work was completed by a reservist, Lieutenant de vaisseau Cogné. This first version was known to Capitaine de vaisseau Raoul Castex, an already established naval author. In 1919, when he became the first head of the newly established Naval Historical Service, he undertook the translation of a number of foreign works, including *Some Principles*, the rights to which Castex asked the Naval Staff to obtain for translation. In a note to the head of the first section of the Naval Staff in August 1919, Castex wrote,

Among the foreign works that the Historical Service of the Naval Staff proposes to translate for the general documentation of the Navy, one of the most important is the work of the English historian Sir Julian Corbett, entitled Some Principles of Naval [sic] Strategy. The theories that he includes, originally gave rise to a certain measure of controversy and are interesting to have made better known from a critical point of view, for the rationale study of strategic questions. Moreover, the book has had, if one believes the reports of Capitaine de vaisseau Vandier, liaison officer with the Grand Fleet, a profound influence on English officers of our era, to the point of leading them to a very marked unity of doctrine in the actions of the recent war.

I would be grateful to the chief of the 1st Section if he would make the necessary arrangements with Sir Julian Corbett, through the intermediary of the naval attaché in London, to authorize the Naval Historical Service to undertake the translation of his work. The excellent reception that the author, charged with the organization of the corresponding office of the English Admiralty, has always reserved for our officers, permits hope that this step will have a favorable result.¹⁴

Instructions were sent to the naval attaché in London, but for reasons that have not been possible to determine, the project came to nothing. More than English obstructionism, it was necessary, no doubt, to blame budget difficulties, since the Historical Service published no translations in the 1920s. But, Castex had discovered Corbett and had read him avidly, even if it was to reject his conclusions as too unorthodox. The opinion he strikes in the chapter, "L'historique succinct de la stratégie navale théorique," opening his *Théories Stratégiques*, resembles an indictment. After giving a brief biographical sketch, noting Corbett's debt to the prior work of Mahan and Colomb, Castex wrote:

¹³ Service Historique de la Marine, Paris: SSEA 42: Le Capitaine de Frégate Vandier, officier de Liaison dans la Grand Fleet, à Ministre de la Marine (Etat Major Général—1^o et 4^o Sections), No 9, HMS *Renown*, le 26 Avril 1918.

¹⁴ Service Historique de la Marine, Paris: SSEA 41: Castex note to M. le capitaine de frégate, chef de la 1^{ère} section de l'Etat Major general, 6 Août 1919. The author wishes to thank Mme. Geneviève Salkin for her assistance in obtaining these documents from the Service Historique de la Marine.

Furthermore, that iconoclast is rather mediocre as a constructor. Also, his views occasionally lack solidity.

A good Anglo-Saxon, he has a phobia about permanent armies on the continent. Recoiling, he detests doctrine coming from these sanctuaries. The pronouncements of the German military scholars, of Clausewitz in particular, are insupportable to him. To him, they appear too confined in their dogmatism, and, in particularly English style, considers them obtuse in the art of conducting war. He rides his hobby-horse of limited war that he presents as original and above the understanding of continental strategists. Fundamentally, he only develops the well-known strategy of combined operations led by a strong power, strong from a naval point of view and weak from a terrestrial point of view. And, with little logic, he attacks in the name of the principles of that strategy those that govern the entirely different case of pure land warfare or of pure naval warfare. he breaks with the idea of the nation-in-arms, of the importance of organized force, of battle, of the offensive, etc. . . . He frequently looks across history, failing to recognize the military effort of England's allies during the wars of the First Empire and those of England herself in Spain, carrying a completely false judgement on the way in which the Japanese conducted their war with Russia, and so on.

The contradictions do not impede it otherwise. It comes back, the opportunity helping, to the good methods of "unlimited" warfare.¹⁵

Castex indulges, here more than usual, in making an analysis. He exaggerated and probably erred in saying that Corbett detested Clausewitz. Corbett had read him with much more care than any other naval author (until Rosinski), including Castex himself, not only in the English translation of Colonel Graham, but also in the original German. The pseudo-theory of the "deflection of strategy by politics" is only a deliberate incomprehension of the Clausewitzian doctrine of the imperative subordination of strategy to politics.¹⁶

Corbett did not make the model of limited war into an absolute, and he failed to recognize the participation of Great Britain's continental allies. Where Castex saw contradictions, a less polemical commentator would reveal instead the complexity of thought which attempted to rise to the theoretical level. Happily, Castex did not rest there. Corbett's errors appeared to him, all the same, to be compensated by other aspects:

On the other hand, he has original ideas worthy of attention, although contrary to those normally received, on the classification of operations, on the several locations where the struggle between organized armed forces ought to take place and the method of seeking battle, on concentration and dispersion. Thus, Corbett's work is a work of "criticism." Reading him may be bitter and disappointing for those who have previously reached a strong conviction on a line of truths that they believe beyond all doubt. But that test will be satisfying for them, forcing them to a revision of their beliefs and to new examination of what they have, perhaps a little too quickly, accepted. That effort is salutary for the spirit. The close proximity of the unbeliever is not always bad. The controversy to which it gives birth has its prize. The faith in the residue which resists the destructive effect of doubt is only stronger for it. It

¹⁵ Castex, *Théories Stratégiques*, Paris: Editions maritimes et coloniales, 1929, vol. I, pp. 57–58.

¹⁶ As Peter Stanford, one of the very rare commentators on Corbett between the 1920s and 1970s wrote in "Sir Julian Corbett and the Dreadnought Era," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, January 1951, p. 71.

comes from that tournament, purified and grand. It is in this sense that Corbett has rendered a great service to the cause of strategy.

Personally, he has given me an intense, intellectual and almost moral, crisis. I have felt the columns of the temple move. I have gone down and verified the foundations. I have ascertained that they remain; he has only found some cracks there. For my part, I have examined, repaired and modified this foundation. Then, I have gone up again, reassured of the solidity of the new edifice, recognizing, despite all, this kill-joy who obliged me to a disagreeable but useful review of myself.

But this critical dimension, pushed to excess, exercises a debilitating influence. A civilian, Corbett is for Castex only an armchair strategist, ignorant of the reality of war.

People who have been with the English Navy, notably Capitaine de vaisseau Vandier our liaison officer with the Grand Fleet, have said that Corbett had a great effect on the English maritime milieu in the years which preceded 1914. This explains some things. Without censure and misgiving, they took action, demonstrating to all a solid and unswerving detachment to key directives. Wasn't Corbett responsible for the long respected, simple and powerful, rules, being enveloped in a sort of fog in English brains during the War of 1914? In connection with Naval Operations [volume 3], the Admiralty judged against him, perhaps, because it correctly estimated that Corbett's theory on the inutility of searching for battle in order to obtain a decisive result was unique to him and the Admiralty opposed it. Thus, the Admiralty reacted against a view that was unwieldy and inexperienced. We pull our selves together and render justice to Corbett's judgement on its merits.

Castex's judgement is not very agreeable, and possibly unjust. The Grand Fleet's prudence during the war is less the result of a theoretician's influence than the lessons of the first months of the war. The sinking of the scout cruiser *Pathfinder* by *U-21* on 5 September and of the three armored cruisers, *Cressy*, *Aboukir*, and *Hogue*, by the *U-9*, commanded by Lieutenant von Weddingen on 21 September, then the loss of the new battleship *Audacious* by a mine on 27 October, followed by the torpedoing of the pre-dreadnought *Formidable* on 31 December had, in that regard, been determinants.¹⁷ And if Admiral Jellicoe had been able to come under Corbett's influence, his successor, Beatty, known for his plain thinking and less attached to Corbett, did not adopt a different attitude, simply because it had not been possible to do otherwise. As we have seen, Castex is more often than not in accord with Corbett, against the orthodoxy that he had not been able to endorse. Like him, he concealed fundamental ideas under historical examples.

However, he remained convinced of the utility of placing this subversive book at the disposition of the French reader. In all probability, it was he who revived the project in the late 1920s, when he was commandant of the *Ecole de*

¹⁷ See James Goldrick, *The King's Ships Were at Sea: The War in the North Sea, August 1914–February 1915*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1984), especially pp. 236–37 on the hysteria created by these losses.

Guerre Navale. The translation of 1918 had been too literal and needed to be entirely revised. That task was given to two officers: Capitaine de corvette Tanguy and Capitaine de vaisseau de réserve Bienaimé, who completed it in 1932. There is scarcely any doubt that Castex read it: one can observe that the “armed forces” of Corbett become Castex’s “*force organisée*,” a particularly castexian concept. But once again, for reasons that are unknown to us, the project did not reach fruition. A small number of copies of a revised version of that translation were typed, of which one copy (carrying the number 12) survived on the shelves of the library in the Naval Historical Service. That copy served as the basis for the French text, finally published, after seventy-four years, in 1993. This translation was revised with reference to Eric Grove’s 1988 U.S. Naval Institute edition, and includes translations of the two versions of the “Green Pamphlet” published there as well as a translation of Herbert Rosinski’s previously unpublished 1953 lecture at the Naval War College in Newport, “Mahan and Corbett.”

While Corbett remained virtually unknown in the francophone world until 1993, Richmond remains obscure. In Richmond’s case, there is some irony in this fact, as he read rather widely in French naval literature, and had personally met Castex once, presented copies of his books to him “with highest regards,” visited the Ecole de Guerre Navale, and wrote about Castex, summarizing and reviewing his works for an English audience. A member of the French Académie de Marine, Richmond published his 1934 lecture to the Académie on *le Bailli de Suffren* in Paris and, in 1942, Oxford University Press published a French translation of one of his pamphlets in its “International Studies” series. In his “Succinct History of Naval Strategic Theory,” Castex gave only two lines to Richmond. Ending his commentary about Corbett, Castex wrote:

*On the other hand, Corbett revived the interests of English officers in historical and strategic questions. He has particularly inspired and guided Admiral Richmond, Director of the Royal Naval College, who in 1920 published his work, The Navy in the War of 1739–1748.*¹⁸

In the second edition, published in 1937, Castex added a further, very short statement on Richmond:

*The numerous works of Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, often on strategic themes and generally rather curious and picturesque, are so well known to the French maritime community, that I do not think it necessary to give even the shortest analysis of them.*¹⁹

It is difficult to see this sentence as a tribute from Castex to his British counterpart, but in the Anglo-American world, Richmond has a higher reputa-

¹⁸ Castex, *Théories Stratégiques*, I, p. 59.

¹⁹ Castex, *Théories Stratégiques*, volume I, second edition, 1937, p. 62.

tion than elsewhere in the world. He was an educator, a reformer, an arms control advocate, but not a classic thinker. As Bernard Brodie wrote in 1942, "In the field of naval strategy, the underlying value of men like Mahan, Corbett, and Castex is still largely intact."²⁰ Richmond was not part of that trilogy. Moreover, the field of naval strategic thinking is wider than what we have been considering here, containing many other authors who have never been translated into English. We should not forget them, merely because they did not write in English.

²⁰ Brodie, *A Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1942), p. x.

Conference Summary

Corbett and Richmond . . . and Mahan and Us

George W. Baer

I will consider two themes set out by John Hattendorf. What can a historian do to assist the navy? Is the importance of history to the navy one of substance or one of process, and to what extent can the two be separated?

What can a historian do to assist the navy? Why would a navy want the opinion of a historian? A traditional claim is that because a navy as an institution needs to plan, it needs guidance, and if it does not receive it from national policy, and if it rightly concludes that operational doctrine is not enough, it must turn to deduction, to presumption, to an institutional self-definition of national interest, and for guidance on these, it turns to history. Mahan said that history was a valid guide, and he used the past to justify America's new offensive fleet navy. Who am I to cavil: Mahan was the only serving officer ever elected President of the American Historical Association. The problem is that historians don't much believe that the past is much of a guide to the future. Most of us have no confidence in historical prophecy, or that the services will take the past seriously. Admiral Liardet was explicit on that point last night: we are in a period, he said, "of an unprecedented cusp of technological and historical progress; I am not sure that the lessons of history apply any more." However, if we take another perspective, that the lessons of history are not lessons of substance (and substantive lessons learned are not revealed prospectively, anyway) but lessons of process, lessons of a discipline, lessons of a mode of inquiry, then history does have a lesson in its sense of variety, particularity, contingency, volition—in short in its awareness of human experience.

Admiral Liardet titled his remarks: "Trends and Change." Trends are one level of historical generalization. Historians are well placed to establish and make sense of what a trend is, and what is change. That is their business. It is something the public wants. Recall the fascination in political circles of a book on trends by Paul Kennedy—himself a major contributor to naval history. At the same time, historians are good at testing trends, warning against too much reliance on them. For trends may not tell us much, after all. They may be wrongly

understood, or false, or sidetracked by the particular, or stopped by unexpected contrary human actions, as in Admiral Liardet's catastrophic discontinuity. That takes us to change, which above all defines history.

Corbett and Richmond, while no less enthusiastic historians than Mahan, were reluctant to prophecy. History, for Mahan, as Donald Schurman said, was "a military exercise that yielded some scholarly insights; not a scholarly search that yielded some military results."¹ That was because Mahan's history was not self-committed. Mahan wrote for a political purpose, to win public support, as well as to educate a navy. His history was propaganda on a big scale. Mahan blurred ends and means in war to create a philosophy of national power. That transcended both the usual categories defining national security, and the canons of history. One result, embraced by navies, was that it reduced the need for strategic thinking, and led to a concentration on force structure and operations. That simplified naval planning, but it was not better history or better naval strategy, and this conjunction disappeared with its political context. Corbett and Richmond had a better sense of the autonomy and value of history, and its use to navies. They rejected the navalists' reification of force. They rejected the idea that navies embodied the national soul. They said that navy officers must never forget that an armed force is a subordinate instrument of statecraft, and that navies could be used in many different ways—contingent, circumstantial, complex.

Corbett and Richmond insisted on the subordination of the navy to national purpose, and asserted the intrinsic flexibility of its operations. This was a great service, for it opened up discussion of options that had been obscured by a focus on operations and battle. It is a message that it is too bad they did not make even more widely, in the manner of Mahan. For navies then and since have not explained well what Till calls the "necessary woolliness" of naval policy. Navies will be in a self-inflicted double bind until their nature is properly explained to public opinion at large and to political agents in particular. Until then, naval warfare will not be understood.

That is a major point. Luce knew it. Mahan knew it. Make the case to the public! There is something grand and wise about Richmond's encouragement of *The Naval Review* and his constant public writings. A historian can and must feed the waters of debate and do his or her best to keep it clear. A society will get the navy it wants, and an informed public will get a better one than an ignorant public. An armed service owes it to itself to present, accurately and fully, its capabilities and its limits, and its special nature. And it should not have to do that anonymously.

¹ D.M. Schurman, "Mahan Revisited," in J.B. Hattendorf and Robert S. Jordan, eds., *Maritime Strategy and the Balance of Power: Britain and America in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin's, 1988), pp. 103–6.

Here are the key conclusions from the conference papers, the keys to Corbett and Richmond. Sailors must think in terms of varied actions and they must be able to describe their profession to their political masters.

That's what our historians were saying. If Corbett was demure in his analysis of force structure, as Jon Sumida shows, if Richmond could be strident, perhaps misguided, as Grove and Baugh show, nonetheless, they both made the point of the instrumentality of navies and the need to think about force on many levels. They showed the complementarity of force, the relation of force to diplomacy, the contingent nature of war, the possible importance of secondary or tertiary matters in strategy, the fact that no single lesson of naval science fits all, and the varieties of ways that navies have been and can be used as instruments of statecraft. Historians are good at showing variety and uncertainty.

Many times, and never more than now, navies and military forces have had to deduce or to presume their future. Mahan tried to make that easy, by turning the future into a given. But Mahan misplaced his confidence. Sailors are not better seers than the rest of us. So how does a navy prepare? There are many tasks, many unforeseeable, which a navy may be called upon to take up, perhaps unprepared. This uncertainty is natural, and so it should be described. But how? Not a priori. Or by deduction from operations. Those won't work. Yet, as Till says, if stress is laid on a navy's inherent flexibility, people say the navy wants everything, a force for every possibility, even though the service can't say what it wants it for. If a navy plans on its own, people think the navy is reversing the required subordination of war to policy. If it waits for political guidance, it won't be ready. That is the double bind. In times like this, a navy is damned if it does, damned if it doesn't.

Historians, immersed in complexity, can explain this "necessary woolliness" as part of what navies are, part of what states and peoples should want navies to be, not as something abnormal, or institutionally self-serving, or beyond strategic good sense. They can explain it credibly, drawing on the past. History is an effective method of instruction of the nature and limitations of sea power, of naval strategy. That is one way historians can help the navy.

The second question from Hattendorf's charge is:

Is the importance of history for the navy one of substance or one of process? The answer is process, for two reasons. One is the difficulty for historians to offer technical advice, at least until they become credible technologists. Second is the positive value of the process of thinking historically.

Richmond jumped into substantive analysis with both feet. He felt incumbent to pronounce on force structure. Baugh shows his deep sense that he had to counter the excessive impact of technology on naval thinking and its operational consequences. None of his recommendations won high Admiralty priority. In his call for protection of commerce, for more ships of smaller, cheaper classes,

for secondary operations for the application of pressure, for a navy of varied purposes, Richmond sounds a bit like Zumwalt *avant la lettre*.

Both Richmond and Corbett asked to what end would ships be used, the simple question at the heart of naval strategy. Both recognized that use is different than command, and that there is much that a navy can do, other than destroying the enemy fleet.

In this perspective read Grove. I confess that discussion of naval arms control bewilders me as much as the Schleswig-Holstein question, but to naval officers arms control means limiting their fighting capacity, a most serious matter. One observer at the Washington Conference, as he listened to Secretary of State Hughes read the names and numbers of the seventy capital ships Hughes proposed to scrap, said: "Hughes is sinking in thirty-five minutes more ships than all the admirals of the world have sunk in a cycle of centuries."² Pens can yield victories more decisive than any admiral could hope for. That's what worried Richmond. Richmond wanted to rationalize naval arms limitation, in light of what he deduced the nation needed. He may have based his small ship theory on unsound technological premises, I don't know, but Hunt's book and Sumida's comments here show that Pollen was his technical adviser, and Hunt goes so far as to say that there can be little doubt that dramatically improved gunnery performances based on computer-directed fire control systems was a major—though necessarily unspoken—assumption of his "ideal" warship concept.³

Richmond's small ship theory stemmed from strategic insight that is valid enough. John Ferris concluded that "had the Admiralty considered Richmond's critique, it might have better understood its strategic needs against Japan."⁴ And Hunt wrote that, on the whole, the broad pattern of WWII proved Richmond correct on Britain's need of large numbers of cruisers and destroyers.⁵

Richmond, despite his own hobbyhorse, was determined to open public debate. If he went off track, perhaps it was because he simply did not have a national policy to follow.⁶ He and the fighting services in the 1920s were trying to prepare for war without a purpose. Richmond typified the problem of a strategist without a policy. No wonder he came across as a fulminator. Of course, the government did have a policy. It was not to prepare for war. It was to reduce the naval force, through diplomacy. Ships were used as bargaining counters. The American Captain William Pratt understood this and lost friends among his

² Cited in T.H. Buckley, *The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1970), p. 73.

³ Barry D. Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, 1871-1946* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1982), pp. 192-93.

⁴ John Robert Ferris, *Men, Money, and Diplomacy: The Evolution of British Strategic Policy, 1919-26* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) pp. 137-38.

⁵ Hunt, *Sailor-Scholar*, p. 207.

⁶ *Ibid.*

brother officers accordingly. Pratt wrote of the Washington conference that the relationship between national and naval policy was misunderstood. The navy, Pratt said, “is first, the statesman’s tool, and second, the warrior’s weapon. Sea power and naval strength are not always synonymous terms.”⁷ Nor is sea power synonymous with national policy. The shortsightedness of Richmond was not just technical ignorance but political myopia.

Corbett’s substantive analysis was more restrained. Sumida’s paper has an impressive description of Corbett struggling with the concept of cruisers. Yet Corbett of course was not a materialist in opposition to what Richmond called the military thinkers. Corbett picked his battles. He comes across well in understanding the limitations, and the strengths, of history. He had sound disciplinary instincts, and stuck to them. Whether or not it was because he was a civilian, I can’t say.

At the same time, as I read Sumida’s paper, I wished Corbett had spoken out somehow on the Pollen controversy. Historians can learn about technology and the often obscure influences that Rosenberg described. They have to, to properly describe the past. Then, as citizens, why not comment on the present? How Corbett might have done this from behind a screen of secrecy I do not know, but I wondered whether, after praising him for restraint, he might not have found some way, as a publicist, a writer of strategy—if not as a historian who might have spoken by analogy—to surface the Pollen alternative, even in the face of the genuine puzzle, on both sides of the Atlantic, of the practical possibilities of long-range firing. Richmond rushed in where Corbett feared to tread.

Given Corbett’s and Richmond’s energy and intelligence, it was sad to see in the papers how public and professional discussion was suppressed, and how that limited naval thinking. A sound naval policy, a sound naval strategy, a sound concept of operations, must be widely understood and widely accepted within and without the service. Mahan knew that, and it animated all his writings. Removal from debate may be comforting, but it exacts a public and professional price.

Where does all this leave the historian’s contribution? The answer is that the historian must play to his or her strength. There is a place for a political, or a technical, agenda. But acting as historian, one must never violate the discipline. And that is why I think that all participants would agree with Sumida and Till, that in the cause of raising the terms and standards of inquiry, specific arguments are less important than rigor and disciplinary self-limitation.

Having said that, I must repeat what Sumida and Rosenberg continue to show us, that historical analysis of naval policy and strategy requires a thorough grasp

⁷ Rear Admiral W.V. Pratt, “Naval Policy and Its Relation to World Politics,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (July 1923), pp. 1073, 1083–84; and, Gerald W. Wheeler, *Admiral William Veazie Pratt, U.S. Navy* (Washington: Department of the Navy, (1974), pp. 185–86.

of its technical nature, and its public background as well. And from the past a historian can set a context, an example, and some alternatives—a process, in short—by which the present may be judged.

Education. On education Corbett and Richmond were on solid ground. Their reform impulse was correct. It was applied in proper quarters. It was not our principals' fault that they found themselves thwarted at Greenwich, in the War Course, at the Imperial Defense College, at *The Naval Review*. They were on the right track. And as Schurman says, both were concerned with the "general problem of educating the State, along with the Navy itself, on maritime functions" and principles of naval strategy. History speaks a public language.

How much influence did they have? We can't really know; education is investment in futures, and you may never know how things turn out. But surely their insistence on seeing the oneness of war, Corbett's statement of the value of theory, his assertion of the primacy of policy and the centrality of combined operations, and Richmond's founding of the Naval Society and *The Naval Review*, to name just a few contributions to education and debate, are enough to merit our admiration. When the students didn't follow Corbett's historical lectures, he changed his tack, and we can't fault him as a teacher for writing *Some Principles* instead. Certainly he served the navy. If the Admiralty misguidedly panicked at the IDC, and put a straitjacket on *The Naval Review*, one can hardly blame Richmond, for whom debate and free flow of information were articles of faith. "In peace, the dissemination of ideas and their discussion cannot fail to do good to a service bent on improving itself from within." (Richmond) That is the contribution of "process."

They must have opened many eyes. From another school, here is an example of first exposure. It's the experience of the remarkable Bradley Fiske that illustrates how much officers had to learn. Fiske had entered the Naval Academy in 1870. In 1903, after thirty-three years of service, including action with Dewey at Manila Bay, then Commander Fiske was sent to a class at the Naval War College. Fiske recalled:

One afternoon during the course Admiral Luce made an informal address that gave me the first clear idea I had ever had about war and the way it is carried on. Before hearing Luce that bright summer morning, I had a vague idea that a war was merely a situation in which great numbers of men or of ships fought one another. I had no clear idea connected with war except that of fighting.

After the brief, but vividly illuminating, talk of Luce, I realized that war is a contest, and that fighting is merely a means of deciding the contest. I realized that, in every war, there is a conflict not only of purposes, but also of ideas, and that this conflict of ideas is not only in the causes of the war, but also in the way in which the contestants on each side wage the contest. I saw that in every war each side tries to effect some purpose, and that it merely uses fighting to effect the purpose. I

saw that the side which understands its purpose the most clearly, which selects the best way of accomplishing its purpose, and which has the best machine ready when war breaks out, must win.⁸

Final points. Hattendorf asks: What should the proper relationship be, in historical studies, between the university and the navy? Schurman describes Corbett as “faced with the almost insurmountable task of teaching strategy and the history it was based on, at the same time,” and asks how it was done. Till gave Corbett’s purpose: to present guides to thought, not directives for action.

It is very difficult to discern permanent characteristics of any human activity. That is the problem of historical relevance, and Till makes the point when he notes that strategic principles governing 1906, say, are not the same as those pertinent to 1992. On the other hand, there are sorts of strategic truths, and Corbett stressed this variety, both historically and theoretically. They include his insistence on the navy as an instrument of statecraft, the limited and contingent, relative and supportive, value of fleet and of sea power, his insistence on combined operations, his definition of the war as beyond the battle, and his stress on the consequences of engagement. Corbett saw the distinction between theory and history, whereas I am not sure that Mahan did. And Corbett saw theory’s limits. The introduction to *Some Principles* is entitled: “The Theoretical Study of War—Its Use and Limitations.” That is intellectual honesty.

Finally, in my position as Chairman of the Strategy and Policy Department, I was touched that Schurman spoke of Phil Crowl’s effort to match history to navies, and I want to say a word about Admiral Stansfield Turner’s remarkable experiment that Phil, Jim King, and the others instituted here twenty years ago and which is still going strong.

The Strategy and Policy course is notoriously and incorrectly referred to as a history course. It is not. Many of our civilian faculty are historians. Our case studies are historical. But we are not a history department; we do not teach the discipline of history. It is our students who want more history, not the faculty. How do we avoid the bind that Corbett got himself into? Partly by not trying too much. What we do is ask questions and state themes, then examine them through history. Therefore, what is important is how we put the questions. And as Rosenberg said, the most important questions are very complex, and often can be expressed properly only after the fact—as guides to the future. So we do not give or seek theorems or answers. We guide thought through critical analyses, not direct actions.

We do not teach operations or force planning. Fortunately for us, there are other departments here that take on those tasks directly. That is a necessary and useful division of labor. But even in the other departments, as with us, the focus

⁸ Bradley A. Fiske, *From Midshipman to Rear-Admiral* (New York: Century, 1919), p. 362.

is on how to think, not what to think. And we are backed up by the navy; we have official support for critical thinking.

I doubt whether our analogic and impressionistic *use* of history would be approved in most university departments. There, at least among the disciplinarily conservative, the idea of “using” history is epistemologically unsound. But we do use history, carefully, as a testing ground, for our critical purposes. Even worse, we encourage counterfactual thinking. We do that because we reject determinism. We believe there are choices and that decisions have consequences. There are alternatives, and that’s what gives history and politics and warfare their contingent natures. We move outside of trends, to change. Trevor Roper said that at any given moment in history there are alternatives, and to dismiss them because they were not realized is to take the reality out of history and, I might add, out of the present. In short, the essence of critical inquiry is knowing how to ask good questions, to know where to look. That, I think, is what historians can teach the navy.

Appendix A

A Bibliography of the Works of Sir Julian S. Corbett

John B. Hattendorf

A. Books by Julian S. Corbett

- A1. *The Fall of Asgard: a tale of St Olaf's Days*
- A1a. London: Macmillan and Co., 1886.
- A1b. (Harper's Handy series, no. 86) New York: Harper, 1886. 198 pages.
[With variant title, *The Fall of Asgard, a novel*]
- A2. *For God and Gold*
- A2a. London: Macmillan, 1887. ix, 427 pages.
- A2b. (Macmillan's Colonial Library, no. 73) London: Macmillan, 1888.
ix, 427 pages.
- A3. *Kophetua the Thirteenth*
- A3a. London and New York: Macmillan, 1889. 2 volumes. viii, 333 pages.
- A3b. (Macmillan's Colonial Library. no. 85) London: Macmillan, 1889.
333 pages.
- A3c. London: Macmillan & Co., 1891. viii, 333 pages.
- A4. *Monk*
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Appendix B

A Bibliography of the Works of Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond

John B. Hattendorf

A. Books by Herbert W. Richmond

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¹ From this entry forward, Richmond's contributions to *The Naval Review* are known only through signed reviews or information in his papers. The records on the authorship of anonymous contributions extend only from 1913–1930, stopping with the death of the first editor, W.H. Henderson.

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- D147. "Some Naval Problems: 'Britain in Danger' and Captain Bernard Acworth." *Nineteenth Century*, 123, February 1938, pp. 193–203.
- D148. "Greek and Roman Naval Warfare." *The Naval Review*, XXVI, 1938, pp. 153–55. [Review of the book by W.L. Rodgers.]
- D149. "The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher." *The Naval Review*, XXVI, 1938, pp. 342–48. [Review of the book edited by Vilhjalmur Stefannson.]

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- D150. "The Importance of the Study of Naval History." *The Naval Review*, XXVII, May 1939, pp. 201–18. [A lecture given on 21 February 1939 at London University in connection with the Julian Corbett Prize Fund.]
- D151. "Strategy by Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 152 (new series, 146), October 1939, pp. 399–407.
- D152. "Strategy by Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 152 (new series, 146), November 1939, pp. 501–4.
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- D154. "Strategy by Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 153 (new series, 147), January 1940, pp. 59-63.
- D155. "Strategy by Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 153 (new series, 147), February 1940, pp. 162-65.
- D156. "Strategy by Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 153 (new series, 147), March 1940, pp. 287-91.
- D157. "Strategy by Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 153 (new series, 147), April 1940, pp. 426-29.
- D158. "Strategy by Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 153 (new series, 147), May 1940, pp. 466-69.
- D159. "Imperialism." *National Review*, 114, May 1940, pp. 556-63.
- D160. "Norwegian Campaign." *Fortnightly Review*, 153 (new series, 147), June 1940, pp. 596-600.
- D161. "Sea Power and Empire" and "Sea Power and Today's War." *The Naval Review*, XXVIII, 1940, pp. 474-76. [Review of books by F.J.C. Hearnshaw, and Fletcher Pratt.]
- D162. "Mahan and Sea-Power Today." *Spectator*, 165, 27 September 1940, p. 313.
- D163. "Torpedo Boat Destroyers." *Fortnightly Review*, 154 (new series, 148), September 1940, pp. 241-44.
- D164. "Leased Bases." *Fortnightly Review*, 154 (new series, 148), October 1940, pp. 385-89.
- D165. "Royal Indian Navy." *Asiatic Review*, new series, 36, October 1940, pp. 698-702.
- D166. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 154 (new series, 148), November 1940, pp. 500-504.
- D167. "War in Greece: The Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 154 (new series, 148), December 1940, pp. 577-80.
- D168. "Sea Power." *The Naval Review*, XXVIII, 1940, pp. 661-70. [Review of the book by T124.]

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- D170. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 155 (new series, 149), February 1941, pp. 159–62.
- D171. "Invasion Possibilities." *The Fortnightly Review*, 155 (new series, 149), March 1941, pp. 270–74.
- D172. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 155 (new series, 149), April 1941, pp. 374–78.
- D173. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 155 (new series, 149), May 1941, pp. 491–94.
- D174. "The Defence of Trade." *The Naval Review*, XXIX, 1941, pp. 202–7. [An introduction to a speech by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Geoffrey Phipps Hornby delivered to the Chamber of Commerce, 28 May 1888. Reprinted from *The Times*, 29 May 1888, following Richmond's piece on pp. 207–12.]
- D175. "Shipping Losses." *Fortnightly Review*, 155 (new series, 149), June 1941, pp. 564–67.
- D176. "Lessons of Crete." *Fortnightly Review*, 156 (new series, 150), July 1941, pp. 62–66.
- D177. "Sea Power after the Last War: A Review of the American Outlook." *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 86:543, August 1941, pp. 430–36. [A review of Harold and Margaret Sprout, *Toward A New Order of Sea Power*.]
- D178. "Commanding the Black Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 156 (new series, 150), August 1941, pp. 159–62.
- D179. "Some Aspects of the War at Sea." *Engineering*, 5 September 1941.
- D180. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 156 (new series, 150), September 1941, pp. 260–64.
- D181. "War Commentary." *Fortnightly Review*, 156 (new series, 150), October 1941, pp. 385–87.
- D182. "British Naval Policy, 1880–1905." *The Naval Review*, XXIX, 1941, pp. 624–27. [Review of the book by Arthur J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power*.]
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- D184. "Diversion Controversy." *Spectator*, 167, 28 November 1941, p. 506.

D185. "Naval Strategy in the East." *Fortnightly Review*, 156 (new series, 150), December 1941, pp. 566-69.

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- D186. "War in the Far East." *Fortnightly Review*, 157 (new series, 151), January 1942, pp. 71-75.
- D187. "Naval Air Arm." *Fortnightly Review*, 157 (new series, 151), February 1942, pp. 150-55.
- D188. "Singapore." *Fortnightly Review*, 157 (new series, 151), March 1942, pp. 240-43.
- D189. "Squandered Sea Power." *Fortnightly Review*, 157 (new series, 151), April 1942, pp. 323-27.
- D190. "Command of the Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 157 (new series, 151), May 1942, pp. 372-76.
- D191. "Mr. Alexander." *National Review*, 118, May 1942, pp. 452-55.
- D192. "Naval History in Public Education." *History*, new series, xxvii, June 1942, pp. 1-14. [Address to the Oxford University History Society, 9 June 1942.]
- D193. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 157 (new series, 151), June 1942, pp. 459-62.
- D194. "Air Power and Sea Power." *Fortnightly Review*, 158 (new series, 152), July 1942, pp. 56-60.
- D195. "Sea Power." *Fortnightly Review*, 158 (new series, 152), August 1942, pp. 120-23.
- D196. "The Third Year of the War at Sea." *Engineering*, 4 September 1942.
- D197. "The Air Arm at Sea in 1941-42." *Fortnightly Review*, 158 (new series, 152), September 1942, pp. 188-92.
- D198. "Command and Operations at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 158 (new series, 152), October 1942, pp. 270-73.
- D199. "War in the Pacific." *Fortnightly Review*, 158 (new series, 152), November 1942, pp. 327-29.
- D200. "Mediterranean Campaign." *Fortnightly Review*, 158 (new series, 152), December 1942, pp. 398-401.

1943

- D201. "Coastal Trade and Flotilla Warfare." *Fortnightly Review*, 159 (new series, 153), January 1943, pp. 30–31.
- D202. "The Primary Object." *Fortnightly Review*, 159 (new series, 153), February 1943, pp. 115–18.
- D203. "The Modern Conception of Sea Power." *The Naval Review*, XXXI, 1943, pp. 23–30.
- D204. "The Years of Endurance, 1793–1802." *The Naval Review*, XXXI, 1943, pp. 66–68. [Review of the book by Arthur Bryant.]
- D205. "U-Boats and Auxiliary Cruisers." *Fortnightly Review*, 159 (new series, 153), March 1943, pp. 181–84.
- D206. "The Objects and Elements of Sea Power in History." *History*, 28, March 1943, pp. 1–16.
- D207. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 159 (new series, 153), April 1943, pp. 267–70.
- D208. "Command of the Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 159 (new series, 153), May 1943, pp. 326–29.
- D209. "Tunisia and After." *Fortnightly Review*, 159 (new series, 153), June 1943, pp. 404–06.
- D210. "Admirals Eight." *The Naval Review*, XXXI, 1943, pp. 205–07. [Richmond's choice of the eight greatest admirals.]
- D211. "Offensive Opening." *Fortnightly Review*, 160 (new series, 154) July 1943, pp. 404–6.
- D212. "Sea Campaign." *Fortnightly Review*, 160 (new series, 154), August 1943, pp. 117–19.
- D213. "Sicily and the Atlantic." *Fortnightly Review*, 160 (new series, 154), September 1943, pp. 179–81.
- D214. "Amphibious Warfare and Combined Operations." *The Naval Review*, XXXI, 1943, pp. 258–60. [Review of the book by Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes.]
- D215. "Italian Surrender and the Far East Situation." *Fortnightly Review*, 160 (new series, 154), October 1943, pp. 256–58.
- D216. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 160 (new series, 154), November 1943, pp. 337–39.

- D217. "Far East and the Mediterranean." *Fortnightly Review*, 160 (new series, 154), December 1943, pp. 401-4.

1944

- D218. "Atlantic Campaign." *Fortnightly Review*, 161 (new series, 155), January 1944, pp. 53-55.
- D219. "The Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Naval College." *The Naval Review*, XXXII, 1944, pp. 34-36.
- D220. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 161 (new series, 155), February 1944, pp. 117-20.
- D221. "Sea Power and Italian Surrender." U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, 70:493, February 1944, pp. 137-41.
- D222. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 161 (new series, 155), March 1944, pp. 189-91.
- D223. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 161 (new series, 155), April 1944, pp. 247-50.
- D224. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 161 (new series, 155), May 1944, pp. 300-5.
- D225. "Command of the Sea and Invasion." *Fortnightly Review*, 162 (new series, 156), July 1944, pp. 29-34.
- D226. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 162 (new series, 156), September 1944, pp. 166-71.
- D227. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 162 (new series, 156), November 1944, pp. 308-13.

1945

- D228. "War at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 163 (new series, 157), January 1945, pp. 35-39.
- D229. "Years of Victory, 1802-1812." *The Naval Review*, XXXIII, 1945, pp. 71-75. [Review of the book by Arthur Bryant, continued in D233, D239.]
- D230. "Key Factor of War Against Japan." *Fortnightly Review*, 163 (new series, 157), March 1945, pp. 162-66.
- D231. "Victory at Sea." *Fortnightly Review*, 163 (new series, 157), May 1945, pp. 316-21.

- D232. "Imperial Co-operation in Naval Defence." *The Naval Review*, XXXIII, 1945, pp. 107-18.
- D233. "Singapore." *The Naval Review*, XXXIII, 1945, p. 173. [Letter to the editor, replying to a comment from a reader on D229. The reader responds to this on pp. 262-63, with Richmond's further reply in D239.]
- D234. "War in the Far East." *Fortnightly Review*, 164 (new series, 158), August 1945, pp. 104-9.
- D235. "Government Control in War." *The Naval Review*, XXXIII, 1945, pp. 248-50. [Review of the book by Lord Hankey.]
- D236. "India and the Indian Ocean." *The Naval Review*, XXXIII, 1945, pp. 253-54. [Review of the book by K.M. Pannikar.]
- D237. "Sea Transport." *The Naval Review*, XXXIII, 1945, pp. 262. [Letter to the Editor.]
- D238. "The Dawn of Liberation." *The Naval Review*, XXXIII, 1945, pp. 333-35. [Review of the fifth volume of Winston Churchill's War Speeches.]
- D239. "Singapore and Alliances." *The Naval Review*, XXXIII, 1945, pp. 341-42. [Letter to the editor, continuing D229 and D233, to which the reader replies in vol. XXXIV, 1946, on p. 104.]
- D240. "The Background of Eastern Sea Power." *The Naval Review*, XXXIII, 1945, pp. 90-91. [Review of the book by F.B. Eldridge.]

1947

- D241. "The Object and Elements of Sea Power in History." *The Naval Review*, XXXV, 1947, pp. 8-16. [Reprints D206, following tributes and obituaries by Admiral Richard Webb, Alfred C. Dewar, H.G. Thursfield, and G.M. Trevelyan on pp. 1-15.]

1980

- D242. "The Importance of the Study of Naval History." *The Naval Review*, 68 (April 1980), pp. 139-50 [Reprint of D150.]

E. Contributions to Newspapers

1921

- E1. "Limitations on capital ship tonnage." *The Times* (London), 23 November 1921, p. 11e. [Letter to the Editor with the pseudonym, "Admiral" dated 21 November 1921.]

1922

- E2. "Mystery Ships." *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 September 1922, p. 600. [Letter to the Editor.]

1923

- E3. "Wellington and the Admiralty." *The Times Literary Supplement*, 1 February 1923, p. 76. [Letter to the editor; reprinted in D49.]
- E4. *The Times* (London), 1 March 1923, p. 9e. [Letter to the Editor.]

1928

- E5. "Prize Money." *The Times* (London), 2 October 1928, p. 12c.
- E6. "British Graves at Sea." *The Times* (London), 10 November 1928, War Graves Number, p. 19b.

1929

- E7. "Defence of Territory." *The Times* (London), 21 November 1929, p. 15f.
- E8. "Naval Armament." *The Times* (London), 22 November 1929, p. 15f.

1930

- E9. "The London Naval Treaty." *The Times* (London), 5 February 1930. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E10. "Naval Reductions: Confidence in the Past." *The Times* (London), 17 February 1930, p. 10d. [Letter to the Editor by Historicus.]
- E11. "War as a Genlemanyly Game." *The Times* (London), 24 February 1930, p. 8e. [Letter to the Editor by Historicus.]
- E12. "Small Cruisers." *The Times* (London), 12 March 1930, p. 10c. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E13. "The London Naval Treaty." *The Times* (London), 26 March 1930, p. 12b. [Letter to the Editor.]

1931

- E14. "Fleets and Formulas." *The Army, Navy and Air Force Gazette*, 11 June 1931, p. 470. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E15. "The London Naval Treaty." *The Times* (London), 4 July 1931, p. 13e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E16. "Naval Lessons in the War." *The Observer*, 5 July 1931. [Review of Newbolt, *Official History of the War*, volume 5.]
- E17. "Admiral Richmond's Views: British Naval Expert Argues for Reduction of Great Size of Fighting Ships." *New York Herald Tribune*, 12 July 1931.

1932

- E18. "Disarmament: 'Equality of Status' When the German Appeal is Effective." *The Times* (London), 11 February 1932, p. 13e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E19. "Naval Armaments." *The Times* (London), 20 February 1932, p. 6c. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E20. "Size of Capital Ships: Real and Relative Power." *The Times* (London), 2 March 1932, p. 8c. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E21. "Capital Ships." *The Times* (London), 16 March 1932, p. 10c. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E22. "Disarmament: Whom do Big Ships Pay." *The Times* (London), 29 April 1932, p. 10a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E23. "Size of Warships." *The Times* (London), 5 May 1932, p. 10d. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E24. "Naval Armament." *The Times* (London), 16 May 1932, p. 6a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E25. "Disarmament: Abolition of the Torpedo," *The Times* (London), 18 June 1932, p. 18d. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E26. "Naval Armament." *The Times* (London), 2 July 1932, p. 8a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E27. "British Sea Power: The Navy Today and in 1775," *The Times* (London), 4 July 1932, p. 13e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E28. "Naval Armament." *The Times* (London), 12 July 1932, p. 10g. [Letter to the Editor.]

- E29. "Naval Armament." *The Times* (London), 21 July 1932, p. 8c. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E30. "Big Ships A Superstition Analyzed," *The Times* (London), 10 November 1932, p. 15g. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E31. "Big Ships: The U.S. and Japan." *The Times* (London), 12 November 1932, p. 13f. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E32. "Disarmament: Penalties for an Aggressor: Boycott and Blockade." *The Times* (London), 23 November 1932, p. 8a. [Letter to the Editor.]

1933

- E33. "Naval Cadets." *The Times* (London), 10 June 1933, p. 8c. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E34. "Air Bombing: Abolition in Naval Warfare." *The Times* (London), 5 August 1933, p. 6a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E35. "Bombing from the Air." *The Times* (London), 14 August 1933, p. 6a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E36. "Air Bombing." *The Times* (London), 19 August 1933, p. 13a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E37. "Bombing from the Air." *The Times* (London), 28 August 1933, p. 6a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E38. "Navy." *The Times* (London), 20 November 1933, p. 8a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E39. "Cruiser or Granary." *The Times* (London), 12 December 1933, p. 10c. [Letter to the Editor.]

1934

- E40. "Functions of Battleships." *The Times* (London), 17 March 1934, p. 8c. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E41. "Action at Sea: Size of Warships." *The Times* (London), 20 March 1934, p. 10a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E42. "Modern Sea Power." *The Times* (London), 8 November 1934, p. 10a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E43. "Modern Sea Power." *The Times* (London), 23 November 1934, p. 10d. [Letter to the Editor.]

1935

- E44. "South African Defence." *The Times* (London), 8 February 1935, p. 10a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E45. "Empire Defence." *The Times* (London), 25 February 1935, 13e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E46. "Naval arms control." *The Times* (London), 13 April 1935, p. 8a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E47. "Herr Hitler's Speech." *The Times* (London), 23 May 1935, p. 17e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E48. "France's Naval Strength." *The Times* (London), 2 July 1935, p. 12a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E49. "Sir V. Vyvyan." *The Times* (London), 5 October 1935, p. 18c.
- E50. "Labour and Defences: British Cruiser Strength." *The Times* (London), 12 November 1935, p. 10a. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E51. "Organization of defence." *The Times* (London), 9 December 1935, p. 15e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E52. "Large Battleships." *The Times* (London), 21 December 1935, p. 6e. [Letter to the Editor.]

1936

- E53. "Naval Discipline in 1708." *The Times* (London), 1 January 1936, p. 8c. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E54. "Naval Security: The Size of the Battleship," *The Times* (London), 10 February 1936, p. 8d. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E55. "Equality of Power at Sea: The Big Battleship Policy," *The Times* (London), 27 February 1936, p. 8c. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E56. "Fleet Air Arm." *The Times* (London), 30 November 1936, p. 8a.

1937

- E57. "Burke and the Navy." *The Times* (London), 15 March 1937, p. 17e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E58. "HMS *Africa* at Trafalgar." *The Times* (London), 21 October 1937, p. 17e.
- E59. "Oil Supplies in War." *The Times* (London), 17 December 1937, p. 12b. [Letter to the Editor.]

1938

- E60. "Oil in Wartime: Source of Supply," *The Times* (London), 4 January 1938, p. 8e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E61. "Mercantile Marine." *The Times* (London), 2 April 1938, p. 13d. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E62. "Bombing of Ports: Naval History." *The Times* (London), 1 July 1938, p. 17e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E63. "Bombing Ports." *The Times* (London), 11 July 1938, p. 10b. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E64. "Bombing Ports." *The Times* (London), 29 July 1938, p. 10d. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E65. "Palestine." *The Times* (London), 25 October 1938, p. 10d. [Letter to the Editor.]

1939

- E66. "Control of German Exports." *The Times* (London), 30 November 1939, p. 9e. [Letter to the Editor.]

1940

- E67. "German Whining." *The Times* (London), 13 September 1940. p. 5e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E68. "Names for Destroyers." *The Times* (London), 16 September 1940, p. 5d. [Letter to the Editor.]

1941

- E69. "The Sea War's Four Phases: Vital Importance of Air Support." *Manchester Guardian*, 1 March 1941.
- E70. "The Battle of the Atlantic." *Time and Tide*, 12 April 1941.
- E71. "Slipshod English." *The Times* (London), 12 June 1941, p. 5d. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E72. "The Far East War." *The Manchester Guardian*, 31 December 1941. [Letter to the Editor.]

1942

- E73. "Employment of our resources (esp. Coastal Command)." *The Times* (London), 5 February 1942, p. 5e. [Letter to the Editor.]

- E74. "Control of the Air Arm." *The Times* (London), 5 February 1942. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E75. "The Air Arm in Sea Warfare: Is Navy too Dependant on R.A.F." *Manchester Guardian*, 17 February 1942, pp. 4, 6.
- E76. "The Far East War." *The Manchester Guardian*, 14 March 1942. [Letter to the editor.]
- E77. "Command of the Sea: The Ends and Means. A Concentration of Arms," *The Times* (London), 30 June 1942. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E78. "British Strategy." *The Times* (London), 6 July 1942. p. 5e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E79. "Then and Now." *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 July 1942. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E80. "Sea Power." *The Times* (London), 16 July 1942, p. 5d. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E81. "Command of the Sea—The Goal and the Means—Concentration of a Vital Task." *The Times* (London), 13 August 1942, p. 5e. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E82. "The Naval Air Service." *Sunday Times* (London), 4 October 1942. p. 4 [Letter to the Editor.]
- E83. "The Naval Air Arm." *Sunday Times* (London), 18 October 1942. p. 4 [Letter to the Editor.]
- E84. "The Meaning of Sea Power: Not Wielded by Ships Alone." *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 December 1942. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E85. "Aircraft v. U-Boat." *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 December 1942. [Letter to the Editor.]
- E86. "Youth Training Holidays." *The Times* (London), 30 December 1942, p. 5f. [Letter to the Editor.]

1943

- E87. "Sunk Hospital Ships." *The Times* (London), 24 May 1943, p. 5e. [Letter to the Editor.]

1944

- E88. "Sea Power." *The Times* (London), 20 September 1944, p. 5e. [Letter to the Editor.]

1945

- E89. "Mr Churchill and Mr Pitt." *The Times* (London), 12 May 1945, 5e. [Letter to the Editor.]

F. Translated Articles and Pamphlets

- F1. *La Guerre Navale de nos Jours*. (Études internationales: collection Oxford) [London]: Oxford University Press, 1942. 31 pages.
- F2. *Concepto Moderno del Poder Maritimo* [Madrid, Spain]: Escuela de Guerra Naval, 1950. [Translation from D209: "Modern Conception of Sea Power," published as a mimeographed booklet.]

G. Pamphlets

- G1. *National Policy & Naval Strength XVIth to XXth Century*. (British Academy. Raleigh Lectures) London: Published for the British Academy by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1923. 19 pages. [The Raleigh lecture on history, 1923; reprinted in A3, D45, D50.]
- G2. *Naval Warfare*. [Reprint of B7: "Sea Warfare" lectures.]
- G2a. London: E. Benn, 1927. 96 pages.
- G2b. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1930. 96 pages.
- G3. *Naval History and the Citizen . . . an inaugural lecture delivered before the University on 25 April 1934*. Cambridge: The University Press, 1934. 46 pages.
- G4. *Le Bailli de Suffren* (Académie de Marine. Communications et Memoires.) Paris: Societe d'Éditions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales, 1938. 20 pages. [Richmond delivered this lecture to fellow members of the Académie de Marine on 19 November 1937.]
- G5. *The Naval Role in Modern Warfare*. (Pamphlets on World Affairs, no. 26) New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1940. 32 pages.
- G6. *The Naval Role in Modern Warfare*. (Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, no. 26) Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940. 32 pages.
- G7. *Amphibious Warfare in British History*. (Historical Association pamphlet, no. 119) [Exeter: Paternoster Press]: printed for the Historical Association by A. Wheaton, 1941. 31 pages.

- G8. *The Invasion of Britain: An account of plans, attempts & countermeasures from 1586 to 1918.* London: Methuen & Co., 1941. v, 81 pages. Published under the auspices of the Historical Association.
- G9. *War at Sea To-day.* (Oxford pamphlets on world affairs, no. 60) London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1942. 32 pages.
- G10. *Policing the Seas.* London: New Commonwealth, 1943. 14 pages. [Reprints articles from the Journal of the New Commonwealth Society.]

Appendix C

Author List for *The Naval Review*, 1913–1930

James Goldrick

The *Naval Review* was published as a wholly anonymous journal. Although the identity of authors are now frequently indicated, the journal continues to include articles under pen names or entirely anonymously. Until now, the identities of anonymous articles have remained known only to the editor, a process which carries certain risks for the historian. Although Admiral Sir William Henderson, the editor from 1913 to 1930, preserved his records within his own copies of *The Naval Review* and in an “Editor’s book,” presently in the keeping of the current editor, Rear Admiral J.R. Hill, those of Admiral Sir Richard Hill for the period 1931 to 1950, do not appear to have survived.

This list of authors for the years 1913–1930 has been compiled by transcribing the table of contents for each year in Henderson’s personal copy of *The Naval Review*, with his handwritten notes identifying the authors. His set is presently in the keeping of the Royal United Services Institution for Defence Studies, Whitehall, London.¹

The authors represent a remarkable cross-section of the Royal Navy and include, not only the “Young Turks” themselves, but a large number of other Officers who went on to high rank and distinction as well as academic and literary success. Stephen Roskill’s first article, as a lieutenant, appeared in 1929. Russell Grenfell, B.B. Schofield, John Creswell, and J.F.C. Fuller (not the only army writer to appear in *The Naval Review*) are all represented. Appearance within the pages of *The Review* might not have been a guarantee of flag rank, but it was certainly a measure of potential for it. Among the names listed here, Midshipman J. Hughes-Hallett resigned from the Royal Navy to enter Parliament and Commander A.U. Willis finished an Admiral of the Fleet, and there are many other junior officers herein who became flag Officers.

¹ The page numbering for volume I (1913) differs in different printings. The original issues for 1913 were printed separately, then reissued as a single, bound volume in 1914, and reprinted in 1915, 1919, and 1922. The 1919 and 1922 versions were printed by a different printer than the earlier printings. Henderson probably used the 1914 re-issue for his author list. The original page numbers in Henderson’s copy is shown in italics following the revised page numbering.

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Canada and the Navy. B.X.	96/ 168
Lt Cdr W.S. Chalmers, RN	
Clyde-Forth Canal, The	144/ 252
Lt A.D. Douglas, RN	
Clyde-Forth Canal, Strategical Principles and the. A.X.	230/ 386
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